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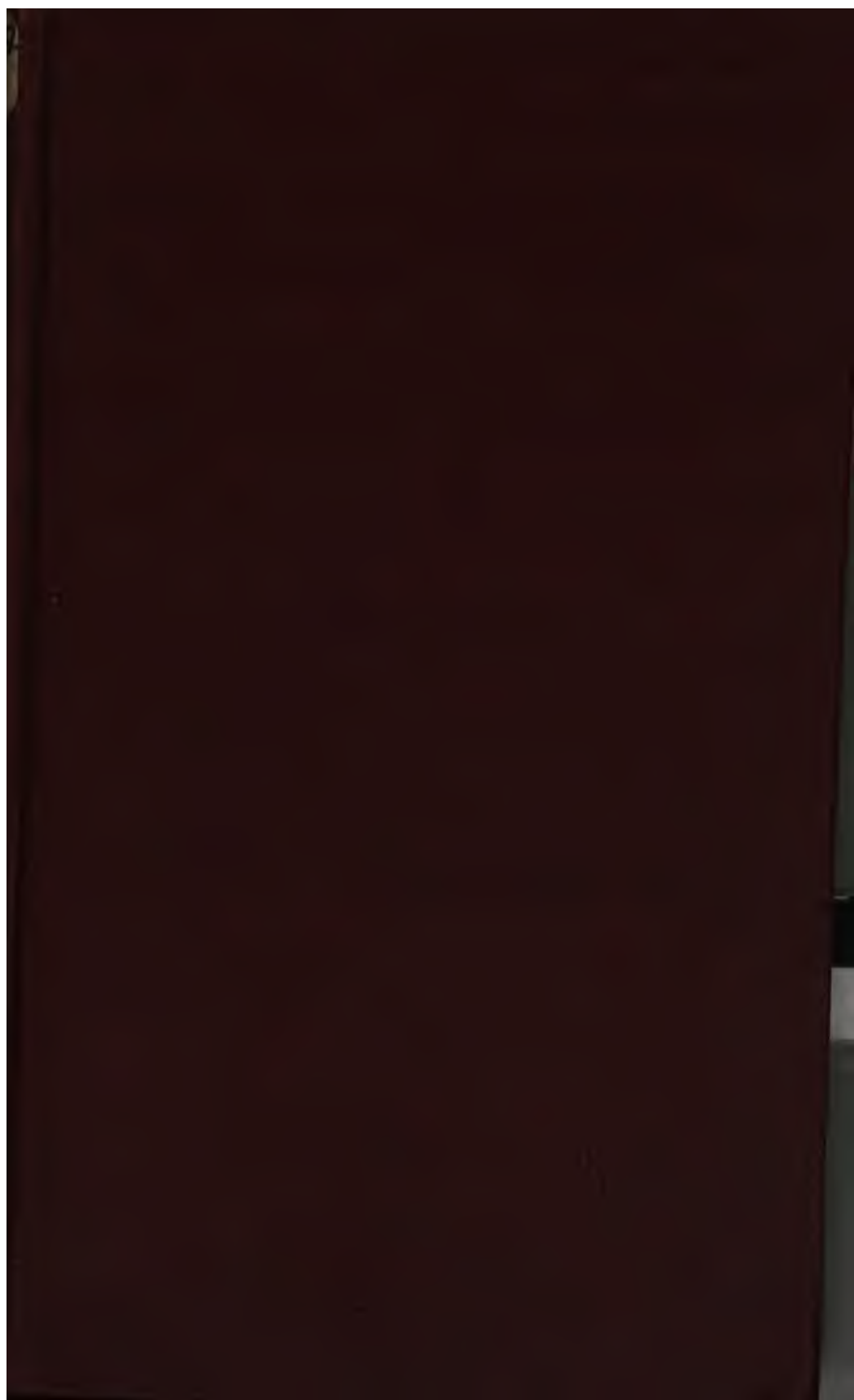
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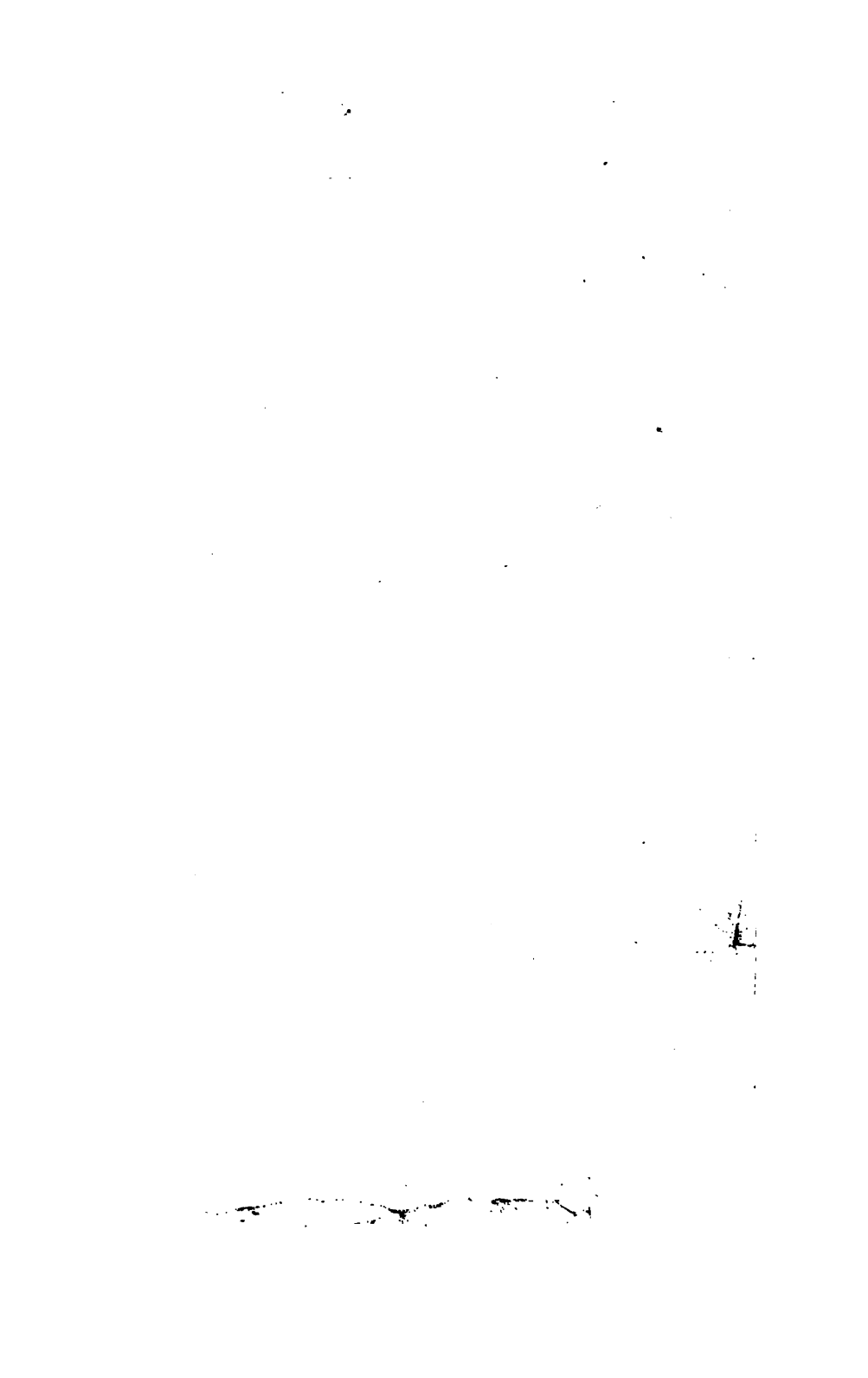


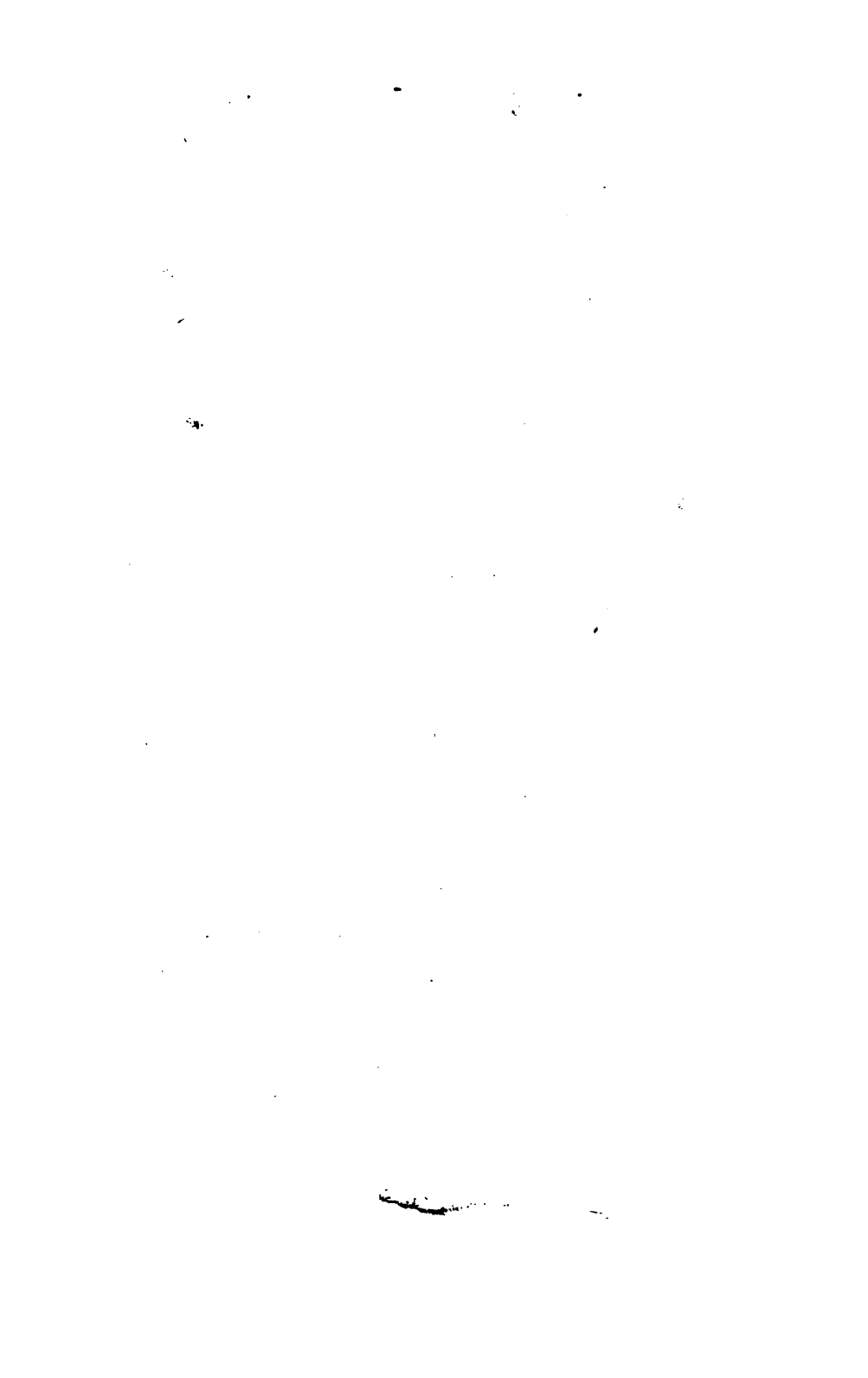
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THE  
**BUCCANEER.**

**A TALE.**



BY  
*in Maria (Fielding), wife of Samuel Carter*  
**MRS. S. C. HALL.**  
*Author of "Sketches of Irish Character," &c. &c.*

---

Stay! methinks I see  
A person in yond cave. Who should that be?  
I know her ensigns now—'tis Chivalrie  
Possess'd with sleep, dead as a lethargic;  
If any charm will wake her, 'tis the name  
Of our Meliadus! I'll use his fame,

REN JONSON.

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IN TWO VOLUMES,

**VOL. I.**

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**Philadelphia:**  
**CAREY, LEA & BLANCHARD.**

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# THE BUCCANEER.

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## CHAPTER I.

*With roomy decks, her guns of mighty strength,  
Whose low-laid mouths each mounting billow laves,  
Deep in her draught, and warlike in her length,  
She seems a sea-wasp flying on the waves.*

DAYDEN.

It was between the hours of ten and twelve on a fine night of February, in the year sixteen hundred and fifty-six, that three men moored a light skiff in a small bay, overshadowed by the heavy and sombre rocks that distinguish the lall of Shepey from other parts along the coast of Kent, the white cliffs of which present an aspect at once so cheerful and so peculiar to the shores of Britain. The quiet sea seemed, in the murky light, like a dense and motionless mass, save when the gathering clouds passed from the brow of the waning moon, and permitted her beams to repose in silver lines on its undulating bosom.

It was difficult to account for the motive that could have induced any mariner to land upon so unpropitious a spot, hemmed in as it was on every side, and apparently affording no outlet but that by which they had entered—the trackless and illimitable ocean. Without a moment's deliberation, however, the steersman, who had guided his boat into the creek, sprang lightly to the shore: another followed; while the third, folding himself in the capacious cloak, his leader had thrown off, resumed his place, as if resolved to take his rest, at least, for a time.

“Little doubt of our having foul weather, master,” observed the younger of the two, in a half querulous, half positive tone, as standing on a huge bank of sea-weed, he regarded first the heavens, and then the earth, with the scru-

tinizing gaze of one accustomed to pry into their mysteries. His companion answered not, but commenced unrolling a rich silk scarf, that had enveloped his throat, and twisting it into loose folds, passed it several times around his waist,—having previously withdrawn from a wide leathern belt that intervened between his jacket and trousers, a brace of curiously-fashioned pistols, which he now handed to the young sailor, while he elevated the hilt of his dagger, so that, without removing or disturbing the silken sash, he could use it in an instant. Having fully ascertained this point, by drawing the weapon more than once from its sheath, he again deposited the pistols in his belt, and buttoned his vest nearly to the throat; then drew the ends of his sash still more tightly, and placing a hand on either side, turned towards the cliffs, measuring their altitude with an eye, which, though deficient in dignity, was acute, and peculiarly fierce in expression.

The seaman, for such was his calling, was about five feet eight or nine inches in height. His hair, as it appeared from beneath a cap singularly at variance with the fashion of the time, curled darkly round a face, the marked features of which were sufficiently prominent, even in that uncertain light, to denote a person of no ordinary mind or character. His figure was firm and well proportioned, and, though he might have numbered nearly fifty years, it had lost neither strength nor elasticity. His whole bearing was that of a man whom nothing could have turned from a cherished purpose, were it for good or evil: though his eye was, as we have described it, fierce and acute, it was also restless and impatient as the waves upon which he had toiled from his earliest years.

Again he surveyed the cliff, and, stepping close to its base, applied the point of a boat-spear to remove the sea-weed that spring and high tides had heaped against it; he then summoned the youth to his assistance, who, after a few moments' search, exclaimed,

"Here it is, master—here is one—here another—but, my eyes! are we to trust our necks to such footing as this? I'd rather mount the top-gallant of the good ship Providence in the fiercest nor-wester that ever blow'd, than follow such a lubberly tack."

"Then, go back to the boat, sir," replied the elder, as he began, with cautious yet steady daring, to ascend, a course attended with evident danger, "Go back to the boat, sir—and, here, Jeromio! you have not been taught your duty on board the Providence, and, I presume, have no scruples, like our friend Oba Springall. Jeromio! I say, hither and up with me!"

"I am here, sir," replied the youth, whose momentary dread had been dispelled by this attempt to promote a rival to the post of honour; "I am here, sir:" muttering, however, soon afterwards to himself, as the difficulties of the way increased, "He thinks no more of his life than if he were a sprat or a spawn." No other word was breathed by either of the adventurers, as they threaded the giddy path, until about midway, when the elder paused, and exclaimed, "Ahoy there, boy! there are two steps wanting; you had better, indeed, go back. To me, the track has been long familiar; not so to you."

The youth thought of his master's taunt and Jeronimo, and resolved to take his chance. "Ay, ay, sir, no danger when I follow you." But the peril was, in truth, appalling, though its duration was brief. Below, the sea that was now rapidly covering the small creek, rudely agitated and opposed by a rising breeze, dashed and foamed against the rocks. To fall from such a height would be inevitable destruction. There was scarcely sufficient light to mark the inequality of the ascending cliffs; and a spectator, gazing on the scene, must have imagined that those who clung to such a spot were supported by supernatural agency. The Skipper nothing daunted, struck the spear, that had served as a climbing-stick, firmly into the surface of mingled clay and stone, and then, by a violent effort, flung himself upwards, catching with his left hand at a slight projection that was hardly visible; thus hanging between earth and heaven, he coolly disengaged the staff, and placed it under the extended arm, so as to form another prop; and feeling, as it were, his way, he burrowed with his foot a resting in the cliff, from which he sprang on a narrow ledge, and was in safety. He then turned to look for his young companion, to whom he extended the boat-spear that had been of such service. Animated by his master's success and example, Springall's self-possession was confirmed; and both soon stood on the brow of the precipice,

"Sharp sailing that, boy," observed the elder, as the youth panted at his side.

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Springall, wiping his face with the sleeve of his jacket. "Take a drop, master," he continued, drawing a tin bottle from his bosom, "'twill warm ye after such a cursed cruise."

The Skipper nodded as he accepted the flask, "I hope you are as well armed on all points as on this; but don't take in too great a reef, or it will make you a heavy sailor before your time: drop anchor now, and keep watch here till farther orders."



"Keep watch here, sir," said Springall, in a mournful tone. And did ye bring me ashore, and up that devil's rope-ladder, to leave me to watch here?"

The Captain looked upon him angrily for a moment. "I am rightly served for taking man or boy out of the canting hulks that lag on the water. Did ye ever chance to hear such a sound on board the ship *Providence* as 'Silence, and obey orders!' Let not your walk, youngster, extend beyond that point, from which, at daybreak, you can catch a view of the court tree, where, if ancient habits are not all put off, there will be revelries ere long: the old church at Minster will be also within your sight, while the sea between us and the Essex coast, and for miles along the Northern ocean, can scarcely bear a sail that your young eyes will not distinguish. Watch as if your life—as if a thousand lives hung upon the caution of a moment; and remember, while the blue light revolves, which you now see in the vessel's bow, all things aboard go on well. You also know the password for our friends, and the reception for our enemies.—If you should be at all afraid, three loud notes on your whistle will summon Jeromio, and a single flash of your pistol will bring the long-boat off, and into the creek in five minutes. You can then tumble down the devil's rope-ladder, as you call it, and send the less timid Italian to keep watch till my return—you understand me." So saying, he strode onwards, leaving the youth, who had not yet passed eighteen summers, to his discontented solitude and ill-temper.

"Understand you! I wonder who does, ever did, or ever will; perched up here like a seamew, and not having touched land for five weeks! 'Beyond that point!' I'll be even with him, for I won't walk to that point: I'll just stay in the one spot." With this resolution, he flung himself upon a bank of early wild thyme, that filled the air with its refreshing odour. Long after his master was out of sight, he continued pulling up tufts of the perfumed herb, and flinging them over the cliff.

"Now, by my faith," he mentally exclaimed, "I have a mind to pelt that Jeromio with some of these clay lumps: he is enjoying a sound nap down there, like an overgrown seal, as he is; and I am everlastingly taunted with Jeromio! Jeromio! Jeromio! at every hand's turn. Here goes, to rouse his slumbers." He drew himself gradually forward, and raised his hand to fling a fragment of stone at his fellow-seaman: the arm was seized in its uplifted position, by a figure enveloped in a dark cloak, that, muffled closely round the face, and surmounted by a slouched hat, worn at the time by both Cavalier and Roundhead, effectually concealed

the person from recognition. He held the youth in so iron a grasp, that motion was almost impossible; and while the moon came forth and shone upon them in all her majesty, the two who contended beneath her light might have been aptly compared, in their strength and weakness, to the mighty eagle overcoming the feeble leveret.

The stranger was the first to speak, as motioning with his disengaged hand towards the revolving light that hung in the vessel's bow, he inquired,

"What colours does that ship carry?"

"Her master's, I suppose."

"And who is her master?"

"The man she belongs to."

"She's a free-trader, then?"

"The sea is as free to a free ship, as the land to a free man, I take it."

"Reptile! dare you barter words with me!—Your commander's name?"

The boy made no answer.

"Dost hear me? Your commander's name?" and as the question was repeated, the mailed glove of the interrogator pressed painfully into Springall's flesh,—without, however, eliciting a reply.

"He has a name, I suppose?"

"That you, or any cowardly night-walker would as soon not hear; for it is the name of a brave man," replied the youth at last, struggling violently, but ineffectually, to reach the whistle that was suspended round his neck.

"Fool!" exclaimed the stranger, "dost bandy strength as well as words? Learn that in an instant I could drop thee into the rolling ocean, like the egg of the unwise bird." He raised the youth from the earth, and held him over the precipice, whose base was now buried in the wild waste of waters, that foamed and howled, as if demanding from the unyielding rock a tribute or a sacrifice.

"Tell me thy master's name."

The heroic boy, though with certain death before him, made no reply. The man held him for about the space of a minute and a half in the same position: at first he struggled fiercely and silently, as a young wolf caught in the hunter's toils; yet fear gradually palsied the body of the unconquered mind, and his efforts became so feeble, that the stranger placed him on his feet, saying,

"I wish not to hurt thee, child!" adding, in a low and broken voice, "Would that the Lord had given unto me sons endowed with the same spirit! Wilt tell me thy own name?"

"No! If you are a friend, you know our pass-word; if a foe, you shall not know it from me. You can go down the cliff, and ask our commander's name from yon sleepy Orson; his tongue goes fast enough at all seasons."

The stranger entirely withdrew his hold from Springall, while he moved towards the summit of the rock. Quick as lightning, the whistle was applied to the youth's mouth, and three rapid, distinct notes cut through the night air, and were echoed by the surrounding caverns.

"I thank thee, boy," said the mysterious being, calmly; "that tells of Hugh Dalton and the Fire-fly."

And he disappeared so instantaneously from the spot, that Springall rubbed first his eyes, and then his arm, to be assured whether the events of the last few minutes were not the effects of a distempered imagination. He had, however, more certain proof of its reality: for, upon peering closely through the darkness into the thick wood that skirted the east, he distinctly noted the glitter of steel in two or three points at the same moment; and apprehensive that their landing must have been witnessed by more than one person—the hostile intentions of whom he could scarcely doubt—he examined the priming of his pistols, called to Jeromio to look out, for that danger was at hand, and resumed his watch, fearful not for his own safety, but for that of his absent commander.

In the mean time, the Skipper, who was known in the Isle of Shepey, and upon other parts of the coast, by the name of Hugh Dalton, proceeded uninterruptedly on his way, up and down the small luxuriant hills, and along the fair valleys of as fertile and beautiful a district as any of which our England can boast, until a sudden turn brought him close upon a dwelling of large proportions and disjointed architecture, that evidently belonged to two distinct eras. The portion of the house fronting the place on which he stood, was built of red brick, and regularly elevated to three stories in height; the windows were long and narrow; and the entire of that division was in strict accordance with the taste of the times, as patronised and adopted by the rulers of the Commonwealth. Behind, rose several square turrets, and straggling buildings, the carved and many-paned windows of which were of very remote date, and evidently formed from the relics of some monastery or religious house. Here and there, the fancy or interest of the owner had induced him to remodel the structure; and an ill-designed and ungraceful mixture of the modern with the ancient, gave to the whole somewhat of a grotesque appearance, that was heightened by the noble trees, which

had once towered in majesty and beauty, being in many places lopped and docked, as if even the exuberance of nature were a crime in the eyes of the present lord of the mansion.

"Sir Robert," muttered Dalton, "may well change the name of his dwelling from Cecil Abbey to Cecil Place.—Why, the very trees are manufactured into Roundheads. But there is something more than ordinary a-foot, for the lights are floating through the house, as if it were haunted. The sooner I make harbour, the better."

He paced rapidly forward, and stood before a small building that was then called a porter's lodge, but which had formerly been designated the Abbey-gate, and which, perhaps, in consideration of its singular beauty, had been spared all modern alteration. The ivy that clustered and climbed to its loftiest pinnacles, added a wild and peculiar interest to this remnant of ancient architecture. It contained a high carriage archway, and a lateral passage beneath it, both decorated with numerous ornamental mouldings and columns, flanked at the angles by octagonal turrets of exquisite elegance. An apartment over the arch, which, during the reign of monastic power, had been used as a small oratory, for the celebration of early mass to the servants and labourers of the convent, was now appropriated to the accommodation of the porter and his family.

The Skipper applied his hand to the bell, and rang long and loudly. For some time no answer was returned. Again, he rang, and, after much delay, an old man was seen approaching from the house, bearing a torch, which he carefully shaded from the night wind.

"My good friend," inquired the sailor in no gentle tone, "is it Sir Robert's wish that those who come on business should be thus kept waiting?"

"You know little of the affliction with which it has pleased the Lord to visit Sir Robert, or you would not have rung so loudly: our good Lady is dying!" and the old man's voice faltered as he spoke the tidings.

"Indeed!" was the only reply of Dalton, as he passed under the archway; but the word was spoken in a tone that evinced strong feeling. The porter requested him to walk into the lodge.

"The place is in confusion, and as to seeing my master, it is a clear impossibility; he has not left our Lady's bedside these three days, and the doctor says she will be gathered to her kindred before morning."

"He will leave even her to attend to me; and, therefore,

my friend, on your own head be the responsibility if you fail to deliver to him this token. I tell you," added Dalton, "death could hardly keep him from me."

The porter took the offered signet in silence, and only shook his head in reply, as they passed together towards the house.

"You can tell me, I suppose, if Master Roland is still with his Highness's army?"

"Alack and well-a-day! God is just and merciful; but, I take it, the death of that noble boy has gone nigher to break my Lady's heart than any other sorrow: the flesh will war against the spirit! Had he died in honourable combat at Marston or at Naseby, when first it was given him to raise his arm in the Lord's cause!—but to fall in a drunken frolic, not befitting a holy Christian to engage in—it was far more than my poor Lady could bear."

"Oliver promised to be a fine fellow."

"Do not talk of him, do not talk of him, I entreat you," replied the domestic, placing his hand on his face to conceal his emotion; "he was, indeed, my heart's darling. Long before Sir Robert succeeded to his brother's property, and when we lived with my Lady's father, I was the old gentleman's huntsman, and that dear child was ever at my heels. The Lord be praised! but I little thought the blue waves would be his bier before he had seen his twentieth year.—They are all gone, sir: five such boys!—the girl, the lamb of the flock, only left. You do not know her, do ye?" inquired the old man, peering with much curiosity into the Skipper's face, as if recognising it as one he had seen in former days.

The sailor made no answer.

They had now entered a small postern-door, which led to the hall by a narrow passage; and the porter proceeded until they stood in one of those vaulted entrances that usually convey an idea of the wealth and power of the possessor.

"You can sit here till I return," observed the guide, again casting an inquiring look upon the form and features of the guest.

"I sit in no man's hall," was the stern reply.

The porter withdrew, and the seaman, folding his arms, paced up and down the paved vestibule, which showed evident tokens of the confusion that sickness and death never fail to create. He paused occasionally before the huge and gaping chimney, and extended his sinewy hands over the flickering embers of the expiring fire: the lurid glare of the departing flames only rendered the darkness of the farther-

most portion of the hall more deep and fearful. The clock chimed eleven: it was, as ever, the voice of Time telling of eternity!

A light gleamed at the most distant end of the apartment, and a short but graceful girl approached the stranger. She was habited in a close vest of gray cloth; her head covered with a linen cap, devoid of any ornament, from under the plain border of which, a stream of hair appeared, tightly drawn across a forehead of beautiful colour and proportions.

"Will you please to follow, sir, to my master's study?"

Dalton turned suddenly round; the entire expression of his countenance softened, and his firm-set lips opened, as if a word laboured to come forth, and was retained only by an effort.

"Will you not follow, good sir?" repeated the girl, anxiously but mildly. "My master is ill at ease, and wishes to return to my Lady's room! it may be——"

The sentence remained unfinished, and tears streamed afresh down cheeks already swollen with weeping.

"Your name, girl?" inquired the stranger, eagerly.

"Barbara Iverk," she replied, evidently astonished at the question. He seized her arm, and, while gazing earnestly in her face, murmured in a tone of positive tenderness—

"Are you happy?"

"I praise the Lord for his goodness! ever since I have been here, I have been most happy; but my dear Lady, who was so kind to me,——" Again her tears returned.

"You do not know me!—But you could not." Hugh Dalton gradually relaxed his hold, and pulled from his bosom a purse heavy with Spanish pieces—he presented it to the girl, but she drew back her hand and shook her head.

"Take it, child, and buy thee a riding-hood, or a farthing-gale, or some such trumpery, which thy vain sex delight in."

"I lack nothing, good sir, I thank ye; and, as to the coined silver, it is only a tempter to the destruction of body and soul."

"As it may be used—as it may be used," repeated the sailor, quickly; "one so young would not abuse it."

"Wisdom might be needed in the expenditure; and I have heard that want of knowledge is the forerunner of sin. Besides, I ask your pardon, good sir, but strangers do not give to strangers, unless for charity; and I lack nothing."

She dropped so modest a courtesy, and looked so perfectly and purely innocent, that moisture, as unusual as it might be unwelcome, dimmed the eyes of the stern man of ocean; and as he replaced the dollars, he muttered something that sounded like, "I thank God she is uncontaminated!" He

then followed the gentle girl through many passages, and up and down more than one flight of stairs: they both at length stopped before a door that was thickly plated with iron.

"You need not wait," said Dalton, laying his hand on the latch. Barbara paused a moment, to look on the wild being, so different from the staid persons she was in the daily habit of seeing at the hall; and then her light, even step, faded on the sailor's ear.

Sir Robert Cecil was standing, or rather leaning, with folded arms, against a column of the dark marble chimney-piece, which, enriched by various carvings and mouldings, rose nearly to the ceiling. The Baronet's hair, of mingled gray and black, had been cropped according to the approved fashion of the time; so that his features had not the advantage of either shadow or relief from the most beautiful of nature's ornaments. He might have been a few years older or younger than the sailor who had just entered; but his figure seemed weak and bending as a willow-wand, as he moved slowly round to receive his visiter. The unusually polite expression of his countenance deepened into the insidious, and a faint smile rested for a moment on his lip. This outward show of welcome contrasted strangely with the visible tremor that agitated his frame; he did not speak either from inability to coin an appropriate sentence, or the more subtle motive of waiting until the communication of the stranger was first made.

After a lengthened pause, during which Dalton slowly advanced, so as to stand opposite Sir Robert Cecil, he commenced the conversation, without any of that show of courtesy, which the knowledge of their relative situations might have called for: even his cap was unremoved.

"I am sorry, Sir Robert, to have come at such a time; nor would I now remain, were it not that my business——"

"I am not aware," interrupted the Baronet, "of any matters of '*business*' pending between us. I imagine, on reflection, you will find that all such have been long since concluded. If there be any way, indeed, in which I can oblige you, for the sake of an old servant——"

"*Servant!*" in his turn interrupted Dalton, with emphasis; "we have been companions, Sir Robert—*companions* in more than one act; and, by the dark heavens above us, will be so in another—if necessary."

The haughty Baronet writhed under this familiarity; yet was there an expression of triumphant quietude in his eye, as if he despised the insinuation of the seaman. "I think, considering all things, you have been pretty well paid for

such acts, Master Dalton; I have never taken any man's labour for nothing."

"Labour!" again echoed the sailor; "labour may be paid for, but what can stand in lieu of innocence, purity of heart, and rectitude of conduct?"

"Gold—which you have had, in all its gorgeous and glowing abundance."

"T'won't do," retorted the other, in a painfully subdued tone; "there is much it cannot purchase. Am I not at this moment a banned and a blighted man—scouted alike from the board of the profligate Cavalier, and the psalm-singing Puritan of this most change-loving country? And one day or another, I may be hung up at the yard-arm of a Commonwealth—Heaven bless the mark!—a Commonwealth cruiser!—or scare crows from a gibbet off Sheerness or Queenborough, or be made an example of for some act of piracy committed on the high seas!"

"But why commit such acts? You have wherewithal to live respectably—quietly."

"Quietly!" repeated the Skipper; "look ye, Master—I crave your pardon—Sir Robert Cecil; as soon could one of Mother Carey's chickens mount a hen-roost, or bring up a brood of lubberly turkeys, as I, Hugh Dalton, master and owner of the good brigantine, that sits the waters like a swan, and cuts them like an arrow—live quietly, quietly on shore! Santa Maria! have I not panted under the hot sun off the Caribbees? Have I not closed my ears to the cry of mercy? Have I not sacked, and sunk, and burnt, without acknowledging claim or country? Has not the mother clasped her child more closely to her bosom at the mention of my name? In one word, for years have I not been a BUCCANEER? And yet you talk to me of quietness!—Sir, Sir, the soul so steeped in sin has but two resources—madness, or the grave: the last even I shrink from; so give me war, war, and its insanity."

"Cannot you learn to fear the Lord, and trade as an honest man?"

Dalton cast a look of such mingled scorn and contempt on his companion, that a deep red colour mounted to his cheek as he repeated, "Yes! I ask, cannot you trade as an honest man?"

"No!—d—n trade:—and I'm *not* honest," he replied, fiercely.

"May I beg you briefly to explain the object of your visit?" said the Baronet, at last, after a perplexing pause, during which, the arms of the Buccaneer were folded on his breast, and his restless and vigilant eyes wandered round



the apartment, flashing with an indefinable expression, when they encountered the blue retreating orbs of Sir Robert.

"This, then:—I require a free pardon from Old Noll, not only for myself, but for my crew. The brave who would have died, shall live with me. As a return for his Highness's civility, I will give up all free trade, and take the command of a frigate, if it so please him."

"Or a revenue cutter, I presume," observed the Baronet, sarcastically,

"Curse me if I do!" replied Dalton, contemptuously—"the sharks! No, no. I'm not come to that yet; nor would I ever think of hoisting any flag but mine own, were it not for the sake of a small craft, as belonging to—no matter what."

"You have seen but little of the girl."

"Too little: and why? Because I was *ashamed* to see her—but now—not ten minutes ago—I was glad she did not know me. Sir Robert, when your own daughter hangs upon your arm, or looks, with her innocent eyes, into your face, how do you feel?"

Sir Robert Cecil had been too well schooled in Puritanism to suffer the emotions of his mind to affect his features. He did not reply to the question, but skilfully turning the conversation, brought the intruder back to his old subject.

"How do you purpose procuring this free pardon?"

"I! I know not how to procure it; I only wish it procured: the means are in your power, not mine."

"In mine!" ejaculated the Baronet, with well-feigned astonishment; "you mistake, good Dalton, I have no interest at Whitehall; I would not ask a favour for myself."

"That is likely; but you must ask one for me."

"*Must!*" repeated Sir Robert, "is a strange word to use to me, Dalton."

"I'm not scholar enough to find a better," replied the other insolently.

"I cannot if I would," persisted the Baronet.

"One word more, then. The protector's plans render it impracticable for me to continue, as I have done, on the seas: I know that I am a marked man, and, unless something be determined on, and speedily, I shall be exposed to that ignominy which, for my child's sake, I would avoid. Don't talk to me of impossibilities; you *can* obtain the pardon I desire, and, in one word, Sir Robert Cecil, you *must!*"

Sir Robert shook his head.

"At your pleasure, then, at your pleasure; but at your peril also. Mark me! I am not one to be thrown overboard,

and make no struggle—I am not a baby to be strangled without crying! If I perish, facts shall arise from my grave,—ay, if I were sunk a thousand fathoms in my own blue sea,—facts that would—— You may well tremble and turn pale! The secret is still in our keeping; only remember, I fall not singly!”

“Insulting villain!” said Sir Robert, regaining his self-command; “you have now no facts, no proofs; the evidence is destroyed.”

“It is *not* destroyed, Robert Cecil,” observed Dalton, calmly pulling a bundle of papers from his vest: “look here—and here—and here—do you not know your own handwriting? You practised me first in deception: I had not forgotten your kind lessons, when in your presence I committed forged letters to the flames!”

The man laughed the laugh of contempt and bitter scorn as he held forward the documents. For a few moments Sir Robert seemed petrified; his eyes glared on the accused papers as if their frozen lids had not the power of shutting out the horrid proofs of his iniquity. Suddenly he made a desperate effort to secure them; but the steady eye and muscular arm of the smuggler prevented it.

“Hands off!” he exclaimed, whirling the Baronet from him, as if he had been a thing of straw; “you know my power, and you know my terms; there needs no more palaver about it.”

“Will not gold serve your purpose?”

“No, I have enough of that; I want distinction and fame, a free pardon, and the command of one of your registered and acknowledged plunderers; or, mayhap, baptism for my own bright little Fire-fly, as the ‘Babe of Grace;’ or—But, hang it, no—I’d sink the vessel first, and let her die, as she has lived, free, free, free! I belong to a civilized set of beings, and must therefore be a slave, a slave to some thing or some one. Noll knows my talents well, knows that I am as good a commander, ay, and for the matter of that, would be as honest a one as the best.”

He paused; the Baronet groaned audibly.

“We have one or two little jobs upon the coasts here of Kent and Essex, trifles that must, nevertheless, be attended to; but this day month, Sir Robert Cecil, we meet again. I will not longer keep you from your wife. Oh! where was I when mine expired! But farewell! I would not detain you, for her sweet and gentle sake: she will be rewarded for her goodness to my child! Remember,” he added, closing the door, “remember,—one month, and Hugh Dalton!”

## CHAPTER II.

"Death! be not proud, though some have called thee  
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;  
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,  
Die not, poor Death—

\* \* \* \* \*

"———Why swell'st thou, then?  
One short sleep past, we wake eternally;  
And Death shall be no more :—Death! thou shalt die."

DR. DONNE.

WHEN Sir Robert Cecil returned to his wife's chamber, all within was silent as the grave. He approached the bed; his daughter rose from the seat she had occupied by its side, and motioned him to be still, pointing at the same time to her mother, and intimating that she slept. "Thank God for that!" he murmured, and drew his hand across his brow, while his chest heaved as if a heavy weight had been removed from it. The attendants had left the room to obtain some necessary refreshment and repose, and father and daughter were alone with the sleeper in the chamber of death. The brow of Lady Cecil was calm, smooth, and unclouded, white as alabaster, and rendered still more beautiful by the few tresses of pale auburn hair that escaped from under the head-tire. The features were of a noble yet softened character, although painfully emaciated; and not a shadow of colour tinged her upturned lip. Her sleep, though occasionally sound, was restless, and the long shadowy fingers, that lay on the embroidered coverlet, were now and then stirred, as if by bodily or mental suffering. There was an atmosphere of silence, not of repose, within the apartment, at once awful and oppressive: and Sir Robert breathed as if his breathings were but a continuation of suppressed sobs.

Constance Cecil, never in earlier life, never in after years, glorious and beautiful as she ever was, appeared half so interesting to her unhappy father as at that moment. There was at all times about her a majesty of mind and feeling that lent to her simplest word and action a dignity and power, which, though universally felt, it would have been impossible to define. If one could have procured for her a kingdom to reign over, or have chosen from the galaxy of

heaven a region worthy her command, it must have been that pale and holy star, which, splendid and alone in the firmament, heralds the approach of day; so unfitted might she have been deemed to mingle with the world less pure, so completely placed by nature above all the littlenesses of ordinary life. Her noble and majestic form was the casket of a rich and holy treasure, and her father's conscience had often quailed, when contemplating the severity of her youthful virtue. Dearly as he loved his wife, he respected his daughter more, and the bare idea that certain occurrences of former years might be known to her was as a poisoned dagger in his heart. He had been a daring, and was still an ambitious man—successful in all that men aim to succeed in; wealthy, honoured, and powerful and—what is frequently more ardently sought for than all—feared; yet would he rather have sacrificed every advantage he had gained—every desire for which he had unhesitatingly bartered his own self-esteem—every distinction he had considered cheaply purchased at the price of conscience, than have lost the good opinion, the confiding love of his only child. Even now he looked upon her with mingled feelings of dread and affection, though her bearing was subdued and her lofty spirit bowed by sorrow, as she stood before him, the thick folds of her dressing-gown falling with classic elegance to her feet, her fine hair pushed back from her forehead and carelessly twisted round her head, and her countenance deepened into an expression of the most intense anxiety: while, assured that the invalid slept on, she whispered into his ear words of hope, if not of consolation.

Lady Cecil had existed for some days in a state of frightful delirium, and during that time, her ravings had been so loud and continued, that her present repose was elysium to those who loved her. Constance bent her knees, and prayed in silence, long and fervently, for support. Sir Robert, leaning back in the richly cushioned chair, covered his face with his hands, withdrawing them only when the sleeper groaned or breathed more heavily. At length both felt as if death had, indeed, entered the chamber, so motionless lay the object of their love: they continued gazing from each other to the couch, until the misty light of morning streamed coldly through the open shutters. Another hour of sad watching passed, and, with a long and deeply drawn sigh, the sufferer opened her eyes: they were no longer wild and wandering, but rested with calm intelligence on her husband and her child.

"It is long since I have seen you, except in strange

dreams," she said, or rather murmured; "and now I shall be with you but for a very little time!"

Constance put to her lips a silver cup containing some refreshment, while Sir Robert supported her head on his arm.

"Call no one in. Constance—Cecil—my moments now are numbered;—draw back the curtains that I may once more look upon the light of morning!" Constance obeyed; and the full beams of day entered the room. "How beautiful! how glorious!" repeated the dying woman, as her sight drank in the reviving light; "it heralds me to immortality—where there is no darkness—no disappointment—no evil! How pale are the rays of that lamp, Cecil! How feeble man's inventions, contrasted with the works of the Almighty!" Constance rose to extinguish it. "Let it be," she continued, feebly; "let it be, dearest; it has illumined my last night, and we will expire together." The affectionate daughter turned away to hide her tears; but when did the emotion of a beloved child escape a mother's notice!—"Alas! my noble Constance weeping! I thought she, at all events, could have spared me this trial:—leave us for a few moments; let me not see you weep, Constance—let me not see it—tears enough have fallen in these halls;—do not mourn, my child, that your mother will find rest at last."

How often did Constantia remember these words! How often, when the heart that dictated such gentle chiding, had ceased to beat, did Constantia Cecil, gazing into the depths of the blue and mysterious sky, think upon her mother in heaven!

Lady Cecil had much to say to her husband during the remaining moments of her existence; but her breathing became so feeble, that he was obliged to lean over the couch to catch her words.

"We part, my own, and only beloved husband, for ever in this world;—fain would I linger yet a little, to recount how much I have loved you—in our more humble state—in this—oh! how falsely termed our prosperity. My heart has shared your feelings. In our late bitter trials, more than half my grief was, that you should suffer. Oh, Robert! Robert! now, when I am about to leave you and all, for ever—how my heart clings—I fear, sinfully clings, to the remembrance of our earlier and purer happiness! My father's house! The noble oak, where the ring-doves built, and under whose shadow we first met! The stream—where you and Herbert—wild, but affectionate brother! Oh! Robert, do not blame me, nor start so at his name;—his only fault was his devotion to a most kind master!—but who, that lived under the gentle

influence of Charles Stewart's virtues, could have been aught but devoted?—And yet what deadly feuds came forth from this affection! Alas! his rich heritage has brought no blessing with it. I never could look upon these broad lands as ours—Would that his child had lived—and then—But they are all gone now—all gone!—Alas! what had we to do with courts, or courts with us?—Our domestic comforts have been blighted—our hearth left desolate—the children for whom you toiled, and hoped, and planned, have been removed from us—nipped in the bud, or the first blossoming!—And oh, Cecil! take the words of a dying woman to heart, when she tells you, that you will go down childless to your grave, if you do not absolve our beloved Constance from her promise to him whom she can neither respect nor love. She will complete the contract, though it should be her death-warrant, rather than let it be said a daughter of the house of Cecil acted dishonourably—She will complete it, Robert—she will complete it—and then die!”

Lady Cecil, overcome by emotion and exertion, fell back fainting and exhausted on her pillow. Recovering herself, however, after a brief pause, she added, in a broken whispering voice, “Forgive me, my dear, dear husband;—my mind is wandering—my thoughts are unconnected—but my affection for you—for Constance—is strong in death. I mean not to pain you, but to warn—for the sake of our only child—of the only thing that remains to tell you of your wife. My breath trembles on my lips—there is a mist before mine eyes—call her in, that my spirit may depart—may ascend heavenward on the wings of prayer!”

Sir Robert was moving towards the door, when her hand motioned him back.

“Promise—promise that you will never force her to wed that man! more—that you yourself will break the contract!”

“Truly and solemnly do I swear, that I will never force her to fulfil—nay, that I will never even urge her to its fulfilment.”

The dying lady looked unsatisfied, and some unpronounced words agitated her lips, as Constance entered unbidden, but most welcome. She knelt by her mother's side, and took the hand so feebly but affectionately extended towards her. The fearful change that had occurred during her short absence was but too visible. The breath that touched her cheek was cold as the morning mist. The sufferer would have folded her hands in prayer, but the strength had departed before the spirit was gone. Constance, seeing that the fine expression of life with which her upturned eyes

had glittered was gradually passing away, clasped her mother's hands within her own: suddenly they struggled for freedom, and as her eye followed the pointing of her parent's finger, she saw the lamp's last beam flicker for a moment, and then expire!—Her mother, too, was dead!

It is ill to break upon the solitude of the dying, though it is good to enter into the solemn temple of death: it is a sad but a useful lesson to lift the pall; to raise the coffin-lid; to gaze upon all we loved, upon all that was bright, and pure, and beautiful, changing with a slow but certain change to decay and corruption. The most careless cannot move along the chamber of death without being affected by the awful presence of the King of Terrors. The holy quiet that ought to characterize a funeral procession is too frequently destroyed by the empty pomp and heartlessness which attend it; but in the death-chamber there is nothing of this; the very atmosphere seems impregnated with the stillness of the time when there was no life in the broad earth, and when only "God moved on the face of the waters." Our breath comes slowly and heavily to our lips, and we murmur forth our words as if the spirit watched to record them in the unchanging book of immortality.

In due time, the funeral train of Lady Cecil prepared to escort the corpse to its final home. Sir Robert was too ill, and too deeply afflicted to be present at the ceremony; and as he had no near relative, Sir Willmot Burrell, of Burrell, the knight to whom his daughter's hand was plighted, was expected to take his station as chief mourner. The people waited for some hours with untiring patience; the old steward paced backwards and forwards from the great gate, and at last took his stand there, looking out from between its bars, hoping that, wild and reckless as Burrell really was, he would not put so great an affront upon the Cecil family, as to suffer its late mistress to go thus unhonoured to the grave.

The day advanced, and as neither the gentleman, nor any one to show cause for his absence, appeared, strange whisperings and surmises arose amongst the crowd, which had assembled from all the villages on the island, as to the probable motive of this most ill-advised delay. More than one messenger was despatched to the top of Minster Church to look out and see if any person like Sir Willmott was crossing the King's ferry, the only outlet in general use from the island to the main land: but though the passage-boat, conducted (as it was termed) by Jabez Tippet, was evidently employed as much as usual, there was no token to justify

farther waiting. The Rev. Jonas Fleetword, one of the soundest of Puritan divines, stood like a statue of cast iron in the doorway, his arms folded on his breast, and his brow contracting and contracting into a narrow and fretted arch, as the minute-hand moved round and round the dial of the old clock. At length, assuming to himself the command, which in those times was as willingly ceded to the Reformed minister as it had formerly been to the not more arbitrary Catholic priest, he ordered the procession "to tarry no longer the coming of him whose feet were shod with heaviness, but to depart forthwith in the name of the Lord."

The place of interment was at East-Church, a distance of about four miles from Cecil Place; and as they paced it but slowly, the increasing chill of the gathering clouds gave intimation that the prime of day was sinking into the even-tide before the spire was in sight. As they at length ascended the hill upon whose summit was the vault of the Cecils, a young gentleman, mounted on a gray and noble charger, met the funeral train so suddenly, that those who preceded halted, and for a moment it was rumoured, that Sir Willmott Burrell, though late and last, had taken the lower road from King's ferry, and so arrived in time to behold the remains of her who was to have been his mother, deposited in the tomb.

When the people observed, however, that the salutation of respect made by the youth to the Rev. Jonas Fleetword was followed by no sign of recognition, they moved silently onward, marvelling amongst themselves at the young gentleman's keeping a little in advance of the clergyman, so as to take the exact station which belonged to the chief mourner. He was habited in a suit of the deepest black; and though the cloak which fell in ample folds from his throat concealed his figure, yet his movements indicated that it was slight and graceful. His broad hat completely shaded his face, but the luxuriant curls of light hair, which, moistened by the misty atmosphere, fell negligently beneath its brim, intimated that he was more akin to the Cavalier than the Roundhead.

By the time the ceremony was concluded, and the divine had finished one of those energetic and powerful appeals to the feelings which so effectually roused or subdued, as it pleased him to desire, darkness had nearly shrouded the surrounding landscape; and the multitude, whom respect or curiosity had assembled, retired from the churchyard, and wended to their homes. The year was in its third month, and the weather, which, when Hugh Dalton landed, had been clear and fine, was now foggy and cold:—



"The dewy night had with her frosty shade  
Immantled all the world, and the stiff ground  
Sparkled in ice——"

Yet the steed of the youth, who had so uncereemoniously joined Lady Cecil's funeral, was cropping the withered grass from the church-yard graves, while his master, apparently unconscious of the deepening night, leaned against one of the richly ornamented stone slabs that marked the entrance to the vault.

Suddenly the clatter of horses' hoofs sounded on the crisp road, the cavalier involuntarily placed his hand on his sword, and his horse lifted his head from the earth, bent back his ears, and whinnied in the low and peculiar tone that serves to intimate the approach of strangers. The travellers (for there were two) halted in the church-yard gate.

"What ho there!" exclaimed the foremost, "you, sir, who are pondering in grave-yards at this hour, canst tell me if Lady Cecil's funeral took place this morning?"

"Her ladyship was buried this evening," replied the other, at the same time fairly drawing his sword out of his scabbard, though the movement was concealed by his cloak.

"They waited then?"

"They did, for one whose presence was not needed."

"And pray, how know you that? or knowing, think you it wisdom, Sir Dolorus, to give forth such knowledge, when it might be him they tarried for who questioneth?"

"It is because I know you, Sir Willmott Burrell, that I am so free of speech," replied the youth, vaulting into his saddle; "and I repeat it, your presence was not needed.—The lady, as you truly know, loved you not while living, so it was as well that you profaned not her burial by a show of false grief."

"Here's a ruffler!" exclaimed the other, turning to his follower. "And pray, who are you?"

"You shall know that, good sir, when you least desire it," answered he of the black cloak, reining up his horse, that pawed and pranced impatiently: he then loosened the bridle, and would have crossed Burrell to pass into the highway; but the other shouted to his associate, "Hold, stop him, Robin! stop him in the name of the Lord! 'tis doubtless one of the fellows who have assailed his Highness's life,—a leveller—a leveller! a friend of Miles Syndercomb, or some such ruffian, who is tarrying in this remote part of the island for some opportunity of escape. If you are an

innocent man, you will remain; if guilty, this shall be my warrant."

He attempted to pull forth a pistol from his belt, but, before his purpose could be accomplished, the point of his adversary's rapier rested on his throat, which, at the same instant, was grasped with more strength than so slight a person could be supposed to possess. Burrell cried to his comrade for help, but he was already out of hearing, having set spurs to his horse the moment he had seen the assault; he then entreated for quarter in an altered and humbled tone.

"I am neither a robber nor a murderer," replied the youth, "but, not having pistols, I hold my own safety of too much value to relax my grasp, till you pledge your honour not to attack me but with the same weapon I can use in my defence."

Burrell pledged his word "as a Christian and a soldier:" the stranger withdrew his sword.

"And now," said he, fixing himself firmly in his seat, and rolling his cloak around his left arm, "if you wish for honourable combat, I am at your service; if not, sir, I take my way, and you can proceed on yours." He drew up to his full height, and awaited Burrell's answer, who sat as if undetermined what course to pursue. He did not long hesitate; the villain's ready friend—treachery—was at his elbow—in an instant the pistol was presented to the head of his confiding antagonist, who, though unprepared for such an act, bent forward previously to the effort of raising himself in the saddle to give more strength to his good steel.—~~M~~erciful Providence! at the very instant that he bowed himself, the ruffian fired! The ball passed over him—he swayed in his saddle:—the next moment, reining up his horse, he prepared to punish such dastardly conduct as it deserved; but, as worthless purposes are sometimes accomplished by worthy instruments, the fleet steed that Burrell rode was far on its way towards Minster, its track marked by fire-sparks, which glittered in the thickening darkness.

The youth remained on the same spot until the sound of the horse's hoofs were lost in the distance, and then, setting spurs to his own gallant gray, proceeded on his course.

## CHAPTER III.

Now is the time when rakes their revels keep;  
 Kinglers of riot, enemies of sleep. GAY.

"A **Brewer** may be like a fox or a cub,  
 And teach a lecture out of a tub,  
 And give the wicked world a rub,  
 Which nobody can deny.

A **Brewer** may be as bold as Hector,  
 When he had drunk his cup of nectar;  
 And a **Brewer** may be a Lord Protector,  
 Which nobody can deny.

But here remains the strangest thing,  
 How this **Brewer** about his liquor did bring,  
 To be an Emperor or King,  
 Which nobody can deny.

'Then push the **Brewer's** liquor about,  
 And loudly let each true man shout—  
 Shout—"

"Shout not, I pray you, but rather keep silence," exclaimed an old woman, cautiously opening the door of a room in which the revellers were assembled, and thus interrupting their rude, but animated harmony; "shout not: you may hear a horse's tramp without; and Crisp grumbles so hard, that sure I am 'tis no friend's footstep."

"Why, mother," cried one of the company, winking at the rest, "you say it was a horse you heard?"

"Well! and I say so still, good master Roupall."

"Sure you do not make friends of horses?"

"Better make them of horses than of asses," replied the crone, bitterly; and the laugh was raised against Roupall, who, as with all jesters, could ill brook the jest that was at his own expense.

"I hear no tramp, and see no reason why you should interrupt us thus with your hooting, you ill-favoured owl," he exclaimed fiercely.

"Hush!" she replied, placing her finger on her lip, while the little terrier that stood at her feet, as if comprehending

the signal, crept stealthily to the door, and laying his nose on the floor, drew in his breath hardly; and then erecting his ears, and stiffening his short tail, uttered a low, determined growl.

"There are strangers, and near us too," observed an older man, who had hitherto remained silent; "there is little doubt of their being unfriendly: we had, therefore, better, seeing it would be imprudent to fight, retreat."

"Retreat! and why, I wonder?" inquired Roupall, the most reckless and daring of the set; and whose efforts were invariably directed towards meriting the soubriquet of 'Jack the Rover,' by which he was usually designated among his associates; "what care we whether they be friends or foes! let them enter. Old Noll himself has too much to do abroad, to heed a few noisy troopers in an obscure hostelry in the Isle of Shepey."

"You are always heedless," observed the other; "and would sell your soul for an hour's mirth."

"My soul thanks you for the compliment, truly, Master Grimstone, and my body would repay you for it, if there was time, which, I take it, there lacks just now, for it is past eleven. Observe, gentlemen, Jack Roupall retreats not—he only retires." As he spoke, he pushed from a corner of the apartment a huge settle of black oak, that apparently required the strength of six men to displace, but which the trooper handled as easily as if it had been a child's cradle. He then slid aside a panel, that fitted most accurately into the wall, of which it appeared a part; and in a few moments the party, consisting of some five or six, had entered the aperture, carrying with them the remnants of their feast, at the particular request of the old woman, who exhibited great alarm lest any symptom of revelling should remain. The last had hardly made good his retreat, when a loud knock at the door confirmed the dame in her apprehensions.

"In the devil's name!" she growled, "how am I to shove this mountain into its place? One of you must remain here; I might as well attempt to throw Blackburn cliff into the sea."

"I'll stay, then, if you'll wait a minute," replied Roupall; "I defy the devil and all his works; and old Noll himself, the worst of them;—so here goes."

Another and a louder noise testified the traveller's impatience; but the summons was repeated a third time before the settle was replaced, and the room restored to its usually desolate and inhospitable appearance. Roupall ascended a narrow ladder, that led to the loft of the cottage-like

dwelling, carrying with him a pack resembling those used by itinerent venders of goods; and Mother Hays (for such was her cognomen) holding the flickering candle in one hand, unfastened the door with the other, while Crisp crouched and snarled at her feet.

"You could not have been all asleep, dame," said the stranger, as he threw off his horseman's cloak, and hung his rapier on the back of the nearest seat, "for I distinctly saw lights. Is your son within?"

"No, marry, good sir; he is far away, in London, with his master, Sir Wilmott Burrell, who was looked for home to-day, but came not, as I hear from some neighbours, belonging to East-Church and Warden, who were at Lady Cecil's funeral."

"Do you expect me to believe there is no one in the house but yourself?"

"One other kind gentleman, a pedlar-man, a simple body, who lies above; he's weary travelling, and sleeps soundly."

The stranger took off his hat; and as he shook his head, throwing completely back the hair that had in some degree overshadowed his face, the old woman started, and an undefined expression of astonishment and doubt burst from her lips. The gentleman either did not, or appeared not to notice the effect he produced; but carefully drew from his bosom a small book or tablet, and read in it for some minutes with much attention, turning over and over the one or two leaves upon which his eyes were fixed.

"And are you sure, good woman, that no other persons are in your house save this same pedlar?" he inquired, now fixing his gaze steadily on the withered countenance of Mother Hays.

"Alack! yes, sir, few travellers come to the lone widow's door, and it's an out o' the way place; wouldn't your honour like some supper, or a stoop of wine, or, mayhap, a glass of brandy?—it is useful these raw nights; or a rasher and eggs?"

"Are you quite certain there is no other in the house, and that your son is really not returned?" he again inquired, heedless of her invitation.

"Why should I deceive your honour?—am I not old, and would you that I should so sin against the Lord?"

"You were not always thus piously given," replied the youth, smiling. "Know you aught of this token?" and he united his hands after a particular fashion: "heard you never the words—" and he whispered a short sentence into her ear: upon which she dropped a reverential courtesy, and, without reply, ascended, as quickly as her age and in-

firmities permitted, the ladder that led to Roupall's place of retreat. Ere she returned, however, accompanied by the trooper, another person had entered the dwelling. It was no other than her son Robin, for whom the gentleman had first inquired, and they were both engaged in such deep and earnest conversation, that neither noticed the addition to the party, until the old woman had thrown her arms around her son's neck, so as almost to stifle him with her caresses, seeming to lose all sense of the stranger's presence in the fulness of joy at the youth's return.

"There, mother, that will do; why, you forget I have been in London lately, and 'tis not the court fashion to rejoice and be glad. Besides, I have seen his Highness, and his Highness's daughters, and his Highness's sons, and drank, in moderation, with his Highness's servants; so, stand off, good mother, stand off!—'honour to whom honour.'" And Robin laid his finger on his nose, while a remarkable expression of cunning and shrewdness passed along his sharp and peculiar features.

As he busied himself with preparations for the guest's supper, it was impossible to avoid observing his quick and energetic movements, spare body, dwarfish stature, and long apish arms, that appeared in greater disproportion when viewed beside the now sedate and elevated carriage, the muscular and finely-developed form of the bulky trooper. And, in good sooth, it seemed that Roupall little relished the extraordinary civility shown to the new comer, both by mother and son. Had the stranger been disposed to hold any converse with him, matters might have been different; but he neither asked nor required information—sitting, after his return from the shed in which he had seen his horse sheltered, with his legs stretched out in front of the warm fire, his arms folded on his bosom, and his eyes fixed on the blazing wood that lent a brilliant light to the surrounding objects—giving a simple, though not uncourteous reply of "Yea," or "Nay," to the leading questions occasionally put to him by his rough, yet inquisitive companion. At length, when the rashers were dressed and deposited on the table, flanked on either side with a flagon of Canary and of Gascoigne, and the traveller had done ample justice to his cheer, he, with a conciliating smile and bow, wished the widow and Roupall "Good night," and followed Robin up the ladder, observing that his rest must be very brief, as he had occasion to start early next morning, and begging the good widow and her friend to finish the draught of her own excellent wine, to which he feared to render farther justice. Some time elapsed ere Robin returned; and when he did, he perceived that Roupall was in no gentle humour.

"Have you warmed the chicken's nest, and taken good and tender care of the gentle bird, according to orders, Robin? Gadzooks! I see so many cocks with hen's feathers now-a-days—sweet-scented Cavaliers, who could no more draw a trigger than they could mount the moon, that I think Hugh Dalton must line the Fire-fly with miniver to bring them safely over. A murrain take such fellows! say I—close-mouthed, longeared scoundrels. D—n it! I love a frank heart—"

"And a bloody hand, Master Roupall."

"Stuff! stuff! Robin; few of either party can show clean hands these times; but does yon gallant come from over sea?"

"It might be that he drooped from the sky, for that is over the sea, you know."

"Faugh! you are as snappish as a cur whelp. I mean, what is he about?"

"Sleeping. Zooks! I'm sure he sleeps."

"Is he of good credit?"

"Faith, Roupall, I know not his banker."

"Good again, Master Robin; upon what grinding-stone were your wits sharpened?"

"Right loyally, good trooper; even upon King Log," replied Robin, grinning maliciously; and then, as if fearful that the gathering storm would forthwith burst, he continued; "Come, let's have a carouse, and wake the sleepers in that snug nest between walls; let's welcome in the morning, like gay gallants, while I tell you the court news, and exhibit the last court fashion, as it graces my own beautiful form!"

The man looked at him and smiled, soothed into something resembling good-nature by the odd humour and appearance of his old companion, who was tricked out with much precision in a blue doublet and yellow hose, while a large bow of sad-coloured riband, with fringed ends, dangled from either knee. He then glanced a look of complacency on his own proper person, and replied:—

"No, let them sleep, Robin; they are better off than I. That maidenlike friend of yours has taken possession of my bed, after your mother's routing me up as if I had been a stoat or a dormouse. Of course he is a Cavalier: I suppose he has a name: but is that, too, a secret?"

"Master Roupall," replied the other, with a look of great sagacity, "as to the person, it's hard to say who's who, these times; and as to the name, why, as you say, I suppose he has a name, and doubtless a good one, though I cannot exactly now call to mind what it is; for at court—"

"D—n court!" interrupted the other—"you're all court-smitten, I'm thinking. In plain English, I want to know

who this youngster is? When Hugh is in one of his romances, he cares not who or what he sends us either here, or, what is of more consequence, on the mainland—and we are to receive them and 'tend them, and all the time mayhap, are hazarding our own heads; for I'd bet an even wager that one of the ferrymen is a spy in the pay of old red-nose; and it's little we get for such hazards—it's many a day since even a keg of brandy has been run ashore."

"You have sworn an oath, for which I should exact, I think, the sum of three shillings and fourpence, Jack the Rover; but, I fear me, thou has not wherewithal to satisfy the law, even in a small thing, until thou offerest thy neck unto the halter as a sacrifice. But did Hugh Dalton ever bring you, or any man, into trouble yet?" continued Robin, composing his comic features into a grave and quiet character.

"I can't say that he did."

"I am sure he has had opportunities enough."

"I'm not going to deny that Hugh 's a fine fellow; Robin; but I remember, long ago, ay, thirteen or fourteen years past, before he entered on the regular buccaneering trade, there wasn't a firmer Cavalier amongst the whole of us Kentish men. Blazes! how he fought at Marston! But a few years' sunning off the hot Havaannah either scorches the spirit out of a man, or burns it in."

"And what reason have you to think that Hugh is not now a good Cavalier?"

"Pshaw! he grows old, and it 's no good trying to pull Oliver down. He's charmed. Ay, you may laugh; but no one of us could have escaped the bullet of Miles Syndercomb, to say nothing of dark John Talbot:—I tell ye, he is spell-guarded. Hugh is a knowing one, and has some plan a-foot, or he wouldn't keep beating about this coast as he does, after being so long from it, and using every county but Sussex and Kent. I wonder, too, what placed you, Master Robin, in Burrell or Burrell's service: I thought you were a man of taste till then."

Robin again grinned; and, as his wide mouth literally extended from ear to ear, his face looked, as it were, divided by some accident; so separate did the chin appear from the upper portion of the countenance.

"If you won't talk," growled out the trooper, "I hope you will pay those who do so for your amusement."

"Thou wouldst have me believe, then, thou art no genuine disinterested talker. Ah! Roupall, Roupall! acquaintance with courts has taught me, that Nature in the first place, and Society in the second, have imposed upon us mortals



two most disagreeable necessities: the one is that of eating; the other, that of talking. Now, Nature is a tyrant, and Society is a tyrant; and I, being a tyrant-hater——”

“Slife, man—or mongrel—or whatever you choose to call your twisted carcass,” interrupted Roupall, angrily, “hold your jibber. I wonder Joan Cromwell did not seize upon you, and keep you as her chief ape, while you were making your courtly acquaintance—A pretty figure for courts, truly!—ah! ah! ah!” As he laughed, he pointed his finger scornfully towards Robin Hays, who, however little he might care to jest upon his own deformity, was but ill inclined to tolerate those who even hinted at his defects. As the trooper persevered, his victim grew pale and trembled with suppressed rage. The man perceived the effect his cruel mockery produced, and continued to revile and take to pieces the misshapen portions of his body, with most merciless anatomy. Robin offered, in return, neither observation nor reproach;—at first, trembling and change of colour were the only indications of his feelings—then he moved restlessly on his seat, and his bright and deeply sunken eyes gleamed with untameable malignity; but, as Roupall followed one jeer more brutal than the rest, with a still more boisterous laugh, and in the very rapture of his success, threw himself back in his chair, the tiger spirit of Robin burst forth to its full extent: he sprang upon the trooper so suddenly, that the Goliath was perfectly conquered, and lay upon the floor helpless as an overgrown and overfed Newfoundland dog, upon whose throat a sharp and bitter terrier has fastened. At length, after much exertion he succeeded in standing erect against the wall of the apartment, though still unable to disengage Robin’s long arms and bony fingers from his throat, where he hung like a millstone: it was some minutes ere the gigantic man had power to throw from him the attenuated being whom, on ordinary occasions, he could have lifted between his finger and thumb.

Robin gathered himself up on the spot to which Roupall had flung him: his chin resting on his knees, round which his arms were clasped; his narrow chest and shoulders heaving with the exertion of the conflict; his eyes wild and glittering, yet fixed upon his adversary, like those of some fierce animal eager to dart upon its prey. The trooper shook himself, and passed his hand once or twice over his throat, as if to ascertain whether or not he were really strangled; then returning Robin’s gaze as steadily, though with a different expression, he said,

“Upon my soul, you are as strong a hand at a grapple as

I would care to meet; nor would I believe, did I not know it, that Roupall the Rover, who has borne more blows upon his thick head than there are days in February, and rises six feet two without boots, could be half choked by little Robin the Ranger, who stands forty inches in his shoes;—but I beg pardon for offending a man of your mettle. I warrant you safe from any future jests of mine; I like not quarreling with old friends—when there is nothing to be got by it. Tut, man! leave off your moping, and shake hands like a Christian. You won't! why you are not going to convert your body into a nursery for bad blood, are you? What would pretty Barbara Iverk say to that?"

Robin laughed a laugh so loud, so shrill, so unearthly, that it echoed like a death-howl along the walls; then stretched out and looked on his ill-formed limbs, extended his long and grappling fingers, and muttered bitterly, "Curse!—curse!—curses on myself! I am a dainty morsel for a fair girl's love! Ah! ah! ah! a dainty morsel!" he repeated, and covered his face with his broad palms. Thus, shutting out the sight of his own deformities, and rocking himself backwards and forwards, moaning and jibbering like one distraught, he remained for several minutes. At length, poor Crisp, who had been a most anxious spectator of the scene, ran timidly to his master, and, standing on his hind legs, began licking his fingers with an affectionate earnestness, more soothing to his agitated feelings than all the sincere apologies of the trooper, whose rough good-nature was really moved at what had taken place. Slowly uncovering his face, Robin pressed the little animal to his bosom, bending his head over it, and muttering in a tone the dog seemed fully to understand, by the low whine with which he returned the caress. After a time, his eyes met those of Roupall's, but their meaning was totally changed; they no longer sparkled with fury, but were as quiet and subdued as if nothing had occurred.

"You'll shake hands now," exclaimed the trooper, "and make the child's bargain."

Robin, rising, extended his hand; and it was cordially taken by his adversary, who soon after removed the settle, and entered the concealed room to join his slumbering companions.

Whatever were Robin's plans, reflections or feelings, time alone can develop; for, laying himself before the yet burning embers of the fire, he appropriated the stranger's cloak as a coverlet in which to enshroud himself and Crisp, and, if oral demonstrations are to be credited, was soon in a profound sleep.

## CHAPTER IV.

Yet not the more  
 Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt  
 Clear spring, or shady grove or sunny hill,  
 Smilt with the love of sacred song.

Great things, and full of wonder, in our ears,  
 Far differing from the world, thou hast revealed,  
 Divine Interpreter.

MILTON.

THE morning that followed was rife with the sweet and balmy air and the gay sunshine, so duly prized in our variable climate, because of the rarity of their occurrence; more especially when the year is yet too young to assist with vigour the energies of all-industrious Nature. The trees, in their faint greenery, looked cheerful as the face of childhood; the merry birds were busied after their own gentle fashion, forming their dwellings in the covert and solitude of the wooden slopes which effectually sheltered Cecil Place from the chill blast of the neighbouring sea. The freshened breeze came so kindly through the thick underwood, as to be scarcely felt by the early wanderers of the upland hill or valley green. Even the rough trooper, Roupall, yielded to the salutary influence of the morn; and as he toiled in his pedlar's guise across the Downs, which were mottled with many hundred sheep, and pointed the path-way to King's ferry, his heart softened within him. Visions of his once happy home in Cumberland—of the aged parents who fostered his infancy—of the companions of his youth, before he had lived in sin, or dwelt with sorrow—of the innocent girl, who had loved, though she had forsaken him,—all passed before him; the retrospect became the present; and his heart swelled painfully within him: for he thought on what he had been, and on what he was, until, drawing his coarse hand across his brows, he gave forth a dissolute song, seeking, like many who ought to be wiser, to stifle conscience by tumultuous noise.

About the same hour, our friend Robin Hays was more than usually active in his mother's house, which we have already described, and which was known by the name of the "Gull's Nest." The old woman had experienced continued

kindness from the few families of rank and wealth, who at that time resided in Shepey. With a good deal of tact, she managed outwardly to steer clear of all party feuds; though people said, she was by no means so simple as she pretended; but the universal sympathy of her neighbours was excited by her widowed and almost childless state—three fine sons having been slain during the civil wars—and the fourth, our acquaintance Robin, being singularly undervalued, on the ordinary principle, we may presume, that “a prophet hath no honour in his own country.” This feeling of depreciation Robin certainly returned with interest, indulging a most bitter, and, occasionally, biting contempt for all the high and low in his vicinity, the family at Cecil Place forming the only exception. Despite his defects natural and acquired, he had, however, managed to gain the good opinion of Burrell of Burrell, who, though frequently on the island, possessed only a small portion of land within its boundary. Into this service he entered for the purpose of accompanying the knight to London as travelling-groom. During that brief servitude he rendered himself so useful while sojourning in the metropolis, that Burrell would fain have retained him in his employ—a design, however, to which Robin strenuously objected the moment it was communicated to him. ‘Nature,’ he said, ‘had doubtless made him a bond-slave; but he liked her fetters so little, that he never would be slave to any one or any thing beside.’ He therefore returned to the Gull’s Nest, on the night his late master arrived at Cecil Place, from which his mother’s home was distant about three miles.

Never was there a dwelling more appropriately named than the cottage of Mother Hays. It stood on either a real or artificial eminence between Sheerness and Warden, facing what is called “The Cant,” and very near the small village of East-Church. The clay and shingle of which it was composed would have ill encountered the whirlwind that in tempestuous weather fiercely yelled around the cliffs, had it not been for the firm support afforded to it by the remains of an ancient watch-tower, against which the “Gull’s Nest” leaned. Perched on this remarkable spot, and nestling close to the mouldering but still sturdy walls, the very stones of which disputed with the blast, the hut formed no inappropriate dwelling for withered age, and, if we may be allowed the term, picturesque deformity. Robin could run up and down every cliff in the neighbourhood like a monkey—could lie on the waters, and sport amid the breakers, with the activity of a cub-seal—dive like an otter; and, as Nature

generally makes up in some way or other for defects similar to those so conspicuous in the widow's son, she had gifted him with so sweet a voice, that the fishermen frequently rested on their oars beneath Gull's Nest crag, to listen to Robin's wild and mournful ballads, which full often mingled with the murmur of the small waves as they rippled on the strand. But the manikin, Robin, had higher and better qualities than those we have endeavoured to describe—qualities which Hugh Dalton, with the ready wisdom that discovers at once what is excellent and then moulds that excellence to its own purpose, had assiduously cultivated. Many years before the period of which we treat, Robin had accompanied the Buccaneer on one or two piratical cruises; and though it cannot be denied that Hugh was a better sailor than scholar, yet he generously sought to secure for little Robin the advantages he did not himself possess; Robin, accordingly, received daily instruction in penmanship from a run-away merchant's clerk, the clerk and book keeper, the lubber and idler of the crew.

Robin laboured to reward this kindness by unshaken fidelity, unceasing watchfulness, and a wild enthusiasm which endeared him to the rude captain, as if he were something that belonged exclusively to himself. The Buccaneer knew that secrets, where life and property were at stake, were safe in his keeping; and as the renowned Dalton had often worked in the service of both Cavaliers and Round-heads, a person of ready wit and true heart was most invaluable as an auxiliary on the coast.

If the Buccaneer entertained any political creed, it was certainly in favour of the exiled Charles; a bold and intrepid spirit like his felt something most galling and repulsive in the stern and unyielding government of the Protector. A ruler who not only framed acts, but saw those acts enforced, whether they regarded a "Declaration for a day of Publique Thanksgiving," or "A Licence for transporting Fish in Foreign Bottoms," was not likely to be much after the taste of one who had the essence of law-giving only within himself, and who perceived clearly enough that the royal but thoughtless Stuarts would be more easily managed—more prone, if not from feeling, at all events from indolence, to overlook the peccadilloes of such as Dalton, than the unflinching Oliver, who felt that every evil he redressed was a fresh jewel in his sceptre. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the Buccaneer had decided on offering his services to the Commonwealth: he believed that Cromwell knew his talents and valued his courage; but he also knew that the Protector piqued himself upon consistency, and that, con-

sequently, there would be vast difficulties to overcome, as a price had more than once been set upon his head.

We must, however, conduct our readers back into the fresh morning we have instanced as one of the favourites of spring. Leaving Robin to his preparations for the stranger's breakfast, and premising that he had previously dismissed the midnight revellers on their respective errands, we will roam for a while amid the sheltered walks of Cecil Place.

It was situated on the slope of the hill, leading to the old monastery of Minster. Although nothing now exists except the church, a few broken walls, and a modernized house, formed out of one of the principal entrances to what was once an extensive range of monastic buildings; yet at the time of which we treat, the ruins of the nunnery, founded by Sexburga, the widow of Ercombert, king of Kent, extended down the rising ground, presenting many picturesque points of view from the small but highly cultivated pleasure-grounds of Cecil Place. Nothing could be more beautiful than the prospect from a rude terrace which had been the favourite walk of Lady Cecil. The small luxuriant hills, folding one over the other, and terminating in the most exquisite valleys and bosky glades that the imagination can conceive—the rich mixture of pasture and meadow land—the Downs, stretching to King's Ferry, whitened by thousands of sheep, whose bleating and whose bells made the isle musical,—while, beyond, the narrow Swale, widening into the open sea, shone like a sliver girdle in the rays of the glorious sun,—were objects indeed delightful to gaze upon.

Although, during the Protectorate, some pains had been taken to render Sheerness, then a very inconsiderable village, a place of strength and safety, and the ancient castle of Queenborough had been pulled down by the Parliamentarians, as deficient in strength and utility, no one visiting only the southern and western parts of the island could for a moment imagine that the interior contained spots of such positive and cultivated beauty.

It was yet early, when Constantia Cecil, accompanied by a female friend, entered her favourite flower-garden by a private door, and strolled towards a small Gothic temple overshadowed by wide-spreading oaks, which, sheltered by the surrounding hills, had numbered more than a century of unscathed and undiminished beauty, and had as yet escaped the rude pruning of the woodman's axe. The morning habit of the noble Constance fitted tightly to the throat, where it was terminated by a full ruff of starched muslin, and the waist was encircled by a wide band of black crape, from

which the drapery descended in massive folds to her feet. She pressed the soft green turf with a more measured step than was her wont, as if the body shared the mind's sad heaviness. Her head was uncovered, save that, as she passed into the garden, she had carelessly thrown on a veil of black muslin, through which her bright hair shone with the lustre and richness of the finest satin: her throat and forehead appeared most dazzlingly white in contrast with her sable dress.

The lady by whom she was accompanied was not so tall, and of a much slighter form; her limbs delicately moulded, and her features more attractive than beautiful. There was that about her whole demeanour which is expressively termed coquetry, not the coquetry of action, but of feeling: her eyes were dark and brilliant, her mouth full and pouting; and the nose was only saved from vulgarity by that turn, to describe which we are compelled to use a foreign term—it was *un peu retroussé*: her complexion was of a clear olive, through which the blood glowed warmly whenever called to her cheek by any particular emotion. The dress she wore, without being gay, was costly: the full skirt of crimson tulle descended not so low as to prevent her small and beautifully turned ankles from being distinctly seen, and the cardinal of wrought purple velvet, which had been hastily flung over her shoulders, was lined and bordered with the finest ermine. Nor did the contrast between the ladies end here: the full and rich-toned voice of Constance Cecil was the perfection of harmony, while the light and gay speech of her companion might be called melody—the sweet playful melody of an untaught bird.

"You must not mourn so unceasingly, my dear Constance," she said, looking kindly into the sorrowing face of her friend: "I could give you counsel—but counsel to the distressed is like chains thrown upon troubled waters."

"Say not so, Frances; rather like oil upon a stormy sea is the sweet counsel of a friend: and truly none but a friend would have turned from the crowded and joyous court to sojourn in this lonely isle; and, above all, in the house of mourning."

"I do not deny to you, Constance, that I love the gaiety, the pomp, and the homage of our courts; that both Hampton and Whitehall have many charms for me; but there are some things—some things I love far more. I loved your mother," she continued, in a tone of deeper feeling than was usual with so gay a spirit; "and I love the friend who, while she reproves my follies, can estimate my virtues: for even my sombre sister Elizabeth, your grave god-mo-

ther, admits that I have virtues, though she denies them to be of an exalted nature."

"Were the Lady Claypole to judge of others according to the standard of her own exceeding excellence, Frances, we should, indeed, fall far below what we are disposed to believe is our real value; but, like the rose, instead of robbing less worthy flowers of their fragrance, she imparts to them a portion of her own."

"Now should I like to call that a most courtly compliment, but for my life I cannot—it is so true."

"You pronounce a severe satire on your father's court, my friend; and one that I hope it merits not."

"Merits! Perhaps not—for, though the youngest and least rational of my father's children, I can perceive there are some about him who hit upon truth occasionally, either by chance or intention. There's that rugged bear, Sir Thomas Pride, whom, I have heard say, my father knighted with a mopstick—he, I do believe, speaks truth, and of a truth follows one scriptural virtue, being no respecter of persons. As to General George Monk, my father trusts him—and so—yet have I observed, at any mention of Charles Stuart's name, a cunning twinkling of the eye that may yet kindle into loyalty—I would as soon believe in his honesty as in his lady's gentleness. Did you hear, by the way, what Jerry, my poor disgraced beau, Jerry White, said of her? Why, that if her husband could raise and command a regiment endowed with his wife's spirit, he might storm the stronghold of sin, and make Satan a state prisoner. Then our Irish Lord Chancellor, we call him the true Steel; and, indeed, any one who ventures to tell my father he errs, deserves credit. Yes, Sir William Steel may certainly be called a truth-teller. Not so our last court novelty, Griffeth Williams of Carnarvon, Esq. who, though he affects to despise all modern titles, and boasts of his blood-ties with the Princes of Wales, Kings of France, Arragon, Castile, and Man, with the sovereigns of England and Provence to boot, yet moves every secret engine he can find to gain a paltry baronetcy! Even you, dear Constance, would have smiled to see the grave and courtly salutations that passed between him and the Earl of Warwick—the haughty Earl, who refused to sit in the same house with Pride and Hewson,—a circumstance, by the way, that caused Jerry White to say, 'he had too much *Pride* to attend to the mending of his *soul*.' The jest is lost unless you remember that Hewson had been a cobbler. As to John Milton!"—

"Touch him not," interrupted Constance; "let not your



thoughtless mirth light upon John Milton; there is that about the poet, which made me feel the very first time I saw him, that

‘Something holy lodges in that breast.’

I remember the day well, now more than three years ago, while staying at Hampton Court, (whither your gracious mother had commanded me,) and reading to the Lady Claypole, near the small window of her dressing-room, which opened into the conservatory, one sultry July evening, when the last rays of the golden sun disturbed the sober and to me more touching beauty of the silver night,—at last I could no longer see, and closed the volume; your sister, in sweet and gentle voice, stayed me to repeat some passages from the ‘Masque of Comus.’ How accurately I can call to mind her every tone, as it mingled with the perfume of the myrtle and orange trees, impregnating the air at once with harmony and fragrance!

‘So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,  
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,  
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,  
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt;  
And in clear dream and solemn vision  
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear,  
Till oft converse with heavenly habitants  
Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,  
The unpolluted temple of the mind,  
And turns it by degrees to the soul’s essence,  
Till all be made immortal.’

I was so absorbed by the beauty of the poetry, and the exquisite grace and feeling with which it was repeated, that my eyes were rivetted on your sister; nor could I withdraw them, even when she ceased to speak. Thus abstracted, I was perfectly unconscious that a gentleman was standing close to the great orange-tree, so that the rays of the full moon rested on his uncovered head: his hair was parted in the centre, and fell on his shoulders at either side, and his deportment was of mingled dignity and sweetness. ‘John Milton!’ exclaimed Lady Claypole, rising; ‘I knew not,’ she continued, ‘that you had been so near us.’—‘The temptation was great, indeed, madam: a poet never feels that he has true fame, until lips such as yours give utterance to his lines.’ He bowed low, and I thought coldly, over Lady Claypole’s extended hand. She walked into the conservatory, and called on me to follow. How my heart throbbed!

how I trembled! I felt in the almost divine presence of one whose genius I had worshipped with a devotion which, enthusiastic as it was, I am not even now ashamed of. I longed to fall at his feet, and implore his blessing; to kiss the hem of his garment; and thought, in my foolishness, that inspiration might be communicated by his touch. I pushed back my hair, so that I might not lose a word he uttered, or the least look he gave. 'His sight was so impaired,' he said, 'that the light of day occasioned him much pain; and of late he had been so useless to his Highness, that he feared to intrude too often into his presence.' Lady Claypole made some remark, which, in truth, I little heeded, for I longed again to hear the poet speak; nor did I remain ungratified. In answer to some observation, he stated 'he was well aware that much of what he had written would not meet with the indulgence she had graciously bestowed upon his verse; for, though they both valued freedom, they widely differed as to the mode of its attainment.' To this the Lady Claypole made no reply; and presently we had issued from the conservatory, and stood for a few moments on the terrace. 'How beautiful!' said your sister, as she raised her eyes to the glorious heavens, sparkling with countless stars, whose brilliancy was showered on the now sleeping earth.—'Yes, beautiful!' repeated Milton; and his voice, so musical, yet melancholy, thrilled to my inmost soul: 'Beautiful!' he said again, as if the word was pleasant in his ears; 'and yet the time is coming fast when I shall behold that beauty no more—when I shall be more humbled than the poor worms upon which I may now heedlessly tread—they creep, but see; I shall be a thing of darkness in the midst of light—irrevocably dark!—total eclipse!—without the hope of day! Your pardon, Lady; but is it not strange, that life's chiefest blessing should be enthroned in such a tender ball, when feeling is diffused all over us?'—'The Maker must be the best judge,' replied your sister.—'Tis true,' he said; 'and the same hand that wounds can heal. I will not sorrow, if I can refrain from grief, though it is hard to bear; yet often, when I look upon my daughters, I think how sad 'twill be when I no more can trace their change of form and feature. And this deep affliction comes upon me in my manhood's prime:—life in captivity—all around me grows darker each fair day I live. A bunch of violets was given me this morning; their fragrance was delicious, yet I could not discern the little yellow germ that I knew dwelt within their dark blue petals, and I put them from me because I could not see as well as smell:—'twas foolish, but 'twas natural. The moon at this

very moment looks so sallow—pale,—and you,’ he bowed to us as he spoke, ‘and you, even you, ladies, appear both dim and cold.’ I thought he laid more emphasis on the word *cold* than on the other words, perhaps in allusion to the political differences between Lady Claypole and himself: your sister thought so too.—‘You do us wrong,’ she observed warmly; ‘never, never cold to John Milton! never, indeed, never! This sad affliction, if it should continue, (which the Almighty in his mercy forbid!) will create for you new worlds; when all its treasures are destroyed, you will but close your eyes on earth that you may look through heaven.’ What would I not have given for such a rewarding smile as played upon without disturbing his features! Your sister, surprised into an enthusiasm that was not in keeping with her usually subdued deportment, turned aside, and taking me by the hand, presented me to him, saying, ‘Here, sir, is a little girl, who, though she has only numbered sixteen summers, has learned to value Milton!’ What do you think I said, Frances? Nothing:—that might have passed—but what do you think I did? I fell on my knees, and kissed his hand! I am almost ashamed to repeat such forwardness, though done in all the purity of truth;—not that I think he was displeased.”

“Displeased!” interrupted the Lady Frances, who had kept silence marvellously long; “oh! no, it is not in man to be displeased with the devotedness, the love of woman——”

“I prithee, peace,” interrupted Constance in her turn; for the word ‘love’ had called the flush into her pale cheek; “thou art ever placing earth on a level with heaven.”

“And thou, my saintly friend, wouldst bring heaven down to earth. I remember my sister Claypole treating of this before, saying that Milton laid his fingers on thy forehead, and that thou didst clip off the particular ringlet pressed by them, and enshrine it in a jewelled cross.”

“I confess——”

“To the folly of despoiling thy tresses?”

“Dearest Frances, you are cruel in your gaiety. How I watched his retreating footsteps as he passed under the archway, after bidding us good night! His gait was measured, but, though his sight was so impaired, I observed that his head was thrown upward, and that he walked as one having no fear.”

“Well, give me Milton in the morn, but the gay Lovelace when the twilight shades come down. I know a fair gentleman who sings his ballads most sweetly. You too, had you heard him, would have listened a second tune:—

'True, a new mistress now I chase  
The first foe in the field,  
And with a stronger faith embrace  
A sword—a horse—a shield.

'Yet this inconstancy is such  
As you, too, shall adore—  
I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Loved I not honour more!'

But I forget, the theme is a forbidden one; and I see, Constance, you do not like my poet, and I have a mind not to admire yours! Ah! poor Lovelace! he might have been my laureate."

"I thought the Lady Frances sighed no longer for a thorny crown."

"I may surely love the poetry of a Cavalier without wishing to be the bride of Prince Charlie. My father's fiat has gone forth against my Royal lover's offer, and so I shall be the wife of some staid sober Covenanter, I suppose; that is, if I follow my father's wishes, and marry Will Dulton."

"Better than be the wedded mistress of a dissolute man," said Constance, firmly. "Believe me, Charles Stuart has all his father's weakness without his father's virtues."

"Well, be it so," replied Frances Cromwell; "I did not care; but methinks I should have liked the garniture of a crown and the grasp of a sceptre. You should have been my first maid of honour.—But your pardon, lady fair—you will be the first married, if I can judge from Sir Willmott Burrell's earnestness of late." As she spoke, Constance Cecil grew deadly pale; and, to conceal her emotion, sat upon the step of the Gothic temple before which they had been standing for some minutes. Frances did not observe the change, but heedlessly continued:—"Ah! it is happy for those who can marry as they will, and him they love; to whom the odious sound of 'state necessity' is utterly unknown."

"And think you," said Constance, in a voice struggling for composure, "think you so poorly of me, that I can *will* to marry such as Burrell, of my own free choice! Oh! Frances, Frances! would to Heaven the same grave had closed over me that closed over my mother!" She clasped her hands with an earnestness amounting to agony, and there came an expression over her features which forbade all trifling. Frances Cromwell was a warm, cheerful, and affectionate girl; but to her it was not given to understand the depth or the refinement of minds such as that of her

friend. Her own home was not a peaceful one, for party spirit, that hydra of disunion, raged and ravaged there, without regard to years or sex. The Protector's most beloved child was known to be faithfully attached to the Stuart cause; while his eldest daughter was so staunch a Republican, that she only blamed her father for accepting power bordering so closely upon Royalty. This difference occasioned sad and terrible domestic trouble; and the man, feared, honoured, courted by the whole world, ruling the dynasties of kingdoms, could not ensure an hour's tranquillity within his palace walls! Frances, the youngest, interfered the least in their most grievous feuds. She had so many flirtations, both romantic and anti-romantic, to attend to, that, like all women who flirt much, she thought little. The perfect misery so fearfully, yet so strongly painted upon the countenance of Constance, was to her utterly incomprehensible. Had it been the overboiling of passion, the suppressed but determined rage, or the murmuring of discontent, Frances could have understood it, because it would have resembled what she had full often witnessed; but she had never before beheld the struggles of a firm and elevated mind against a cruel and oppressive destiny. Frances Cromwell looked upon her friend for some moments, uncertain what course to pursue. She knelt down and took her hands within her own; they were cold as death, rigid as marble. She bent over her!

"Constance! Constance! speak! Merciful Providence!" she exclaimed aloud, "what can I do? what shall I do? Barbara! Alas! alas! she hears me not—Dear Constance! This is worse than faintness," she continued, as exertions to restore her proved ineffectual; for Constantia, exhausted by her efforts to appear tranquil, and to chime in with the temper of her guest, until tortured at the very mention of Burrell's name, remained still insensible.

"I must leave her and seek assistance from within," repeated Frances, rapidly unclasping her jewelled mantle, throwing it over her friend, and flying, rather than running, along the shaven path they had so recently paced in gentle converse. No very long time elapsed before the Lady returned, followed by Barbara Iverk and another faithful attendant.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Frances, "she must be recovered, for her position is changed." And so it was—the veil of black had entirely fallen off, and her unconfined hair reposed in rich shadowy masses on her bosom and shoulders: one arm rested on her knee, while the extended hand supported her head; the other was open on her lap, and

upon its small and transparent palm lay a large locket, of peculiar workmanship, set round with brilliants. On this her eyes were fixed; and when her bower-maid, Barbara, endeavoured to rouse her mistress's attention, the first symptom of returning consciousness she gave, was, to hide the jewel within her bosom. She appeared like one waking from a long dream. Frances spoke to her in a tone of gentle cheerfulness—

"Come, dearest, it is cold; we will in: you must be better presently. One moment; let me bind up this hair; it keeps back the cloak from covering your throat, and you shiver like an aspen." Frances was gathering the large tresses eagerly in her hand, when she stopped, and letting them suddenly fall, exclaimed,

"What's here to do! One of the finest of your lady's braids severed more than mid-way, and by no scissors, truly; absolutely butchered! Do but look, Barbara; I am sure 'twas not so this morning!"

The young tire-woman lifted up her hands in horror and amazement; for she very properly regarded her mistress's beautiful hair as under her own especial control, and was about to make some inquiry touching the mysterious incident, when Constance drew the cardinal completely over her head, and, leaning her arm on Barbara's shoulder, proceeded towards the house.

Notwithstanding the great anxiety of Lady Frances on the score of her friend's indisposition, and it is but justice to admit she loved her with all the constancy of which her volatile nature was capable, her affection was nearly overpowered by her curiosity—curiosity to discover how Constance obtained the locket, and how she lost her most admired tress. Yet, to neither of these perplexities had she the slightest clew. Intimate as they had been from childhood; superior as was her rank to that of Sir Robert Cecil's daughter; yet was there no one of her acquaintance with whom she would not sooner have taken a liberty than with Constance Cecil. In the course of the day she tried every little art that female ingenuity could devise, short of saying, "how came you by ~~that~~ locket?" to induce her to talk on the subject—and in vain. Constance made no assertion—offered no explanation; but, when Frances appeared to come too near the subject, she silenced all farther approach to confidential communication, simply by raising her clear, calm, and holy eye, letting it fall upon the animated, restless face of her companion, and then shading its glory by the long silken lashes that almost rested on the exquisitely

moulded cheek. It was this peculiar look that made her lively friend usually designate her "the awful beauty."

Still curiosity, the most busy and feminine sprite, tortured the Lady Frances with extraordinary perseverance; and, in the end, it suddenly occurred to her that Barbara might know or conjecture something about the matter: accordingly, at night, she dismissed her own women, under some pretext or other, to their chambers, and summoned the pretty Puritan to wait at her toilet. Poor Barbara was as neat and as docile a maid as any country gentlewoman could desire; but, as she had never accompanied her ladies to court, to which, because of Lady Cecil's illness, they had been rare visitors of late, she felt somewhat nervous on being called into active duty by so great a personage as the Lady Frances Cromwell. With trembling hands she unlaced the velvet bodice, released the tiny feet from their thralldom, set loose the diamond clasps of the sparkling stomacher; and, after arraying the lady in a wrapping robe of fringed linen, with point-lace collar, commenced the disentangling of her raven hair: this was a task that required skill and patience. Nature had been so bountiful to her own fair mistress, that her hair needed no art to increase either its quality or quantity: the simple Barbara consequently stood aghast when a vast portion of the fabric fell to the ground the moment a little dark band had been separated from the pretty head of the more courtly maiden. Frances laughed as the girl's astonished features were reflected in the polished mirror before which she sat: so evident was her dismay, as she held it forth, exclaiming, "I did not pull it off, my lady—"

"Ah, wicked wench! so you would rob *my* head as well as your lady's. Now, Barbara, tell me truly, what didst do with that same lock I missed this morning?"

"I, my lady?"

"Yes, you. No one else, I suppose, dresses your lady's hair."

"That may be; but I assure your ladyship I never cut off that curl:—it is quite wonderful!"

"So it is, as you say, like a very sensible girl, 'quite wonderful;' but, Barbara, do you think you could find out who did cut it off?"

"Not unless my lady would tell me."

"But is there no way?"

"Only by asking my lady, and that I could not presume to do."

"Nor I either," thought Lady Frances: "But, Barbara, you might think—or—or—see perhaps—"

"Please you, my lady, I do think a great deal, and the Rev. Mr Fleetword said to me only this morning, that I grew in grace as much as in stature. And, as to seeing, please your Ladyship——"

"Pshaw, child! it is not that I mean. Could you not discover? Besides—the locket! did you ever see that locket in your lady's possession till this morning?"

"No, Madam."

"Perhaps," continued Frances, blushing and stammering at her curiosity, "it might be well to ascertain something about both mysteries, for your lady's good."

"I am sure, my lady, I can't tell; but my mistress is very wise, and if she wished me to know any thing of such like, would direct me herself. Shall I put any of this ambergris in your ladyship's hair, or do you better like the musk-rose?"—How perplexing to the cunning is straight forward simplicity? "Now," thought Lady Frances, "one of the court waiting-maids would have comprehended my meaning in a moment; and this wench, with ten times their zeal and real sense, thinks it downright wicked to pry into her lady's secrets. I wonder my women have not taught her the court fashions.—You may go to bed, Barbara; light my night lamp, and give me a book: I do not feel at all sleepy."

Barbara, with great *naivete*, presented to Lady Frances a small Bible that lay on the dressing table;—something resembling a smile passed over the lady's face as she took the volume, but she only observed, "Give me also that book with the golden clasps; I would fain peruse my cousin Walter's last hymn.—What an utterly useless thing is that which is called simplicity!" she said, half aloud, as Barbara closed the door. "And yet I would sooner trust my life in the hands of that country damsel than with the fine ones, who, though arrayed in plain gowns, flatter corrupt fancies at Whitehall or Hampton?"



## CHAPTER V.

"By holy Mary! Butta, there's knavery."

SHAKESPEARE.

HAVING consigned the Lady Frances Cromwell to her perfumed couch, and the companionship of Waller's sweet and sonorous strains, we leave her to determine whether the high and mighty Lady Dorothea Sidney, the Poet's Saccharissa, or the gentle Lady Sophia Murray, the beauteous Amoret of his idolatry, were most worthy the affection he so generously bestowed on both. Waller, the most specious flatterer of flattering courts—Waller, the early worshipper of Charles the First—Waller, the pusillanimous betrayer of his friends—Waller, the adulator of Cromwell—Waller, the wit and the jester of the Second Charles—Waller, the devotional whiner of the bigot James—had not, however, sufficient power to keep the lady from her slumbers long. She was soon in the refreshing sleep, known only to the light-hearted.

Constance Cecil was more wakeful. After Barbara's dismissal from the presence of Lady Frances, she crept with slow and stealthy pace to the chamber of her dear mistress, and softly turning the bolt, displaced the curtains of silver damask with so light a touch, that her entrance was un-noticed. The girl perceived at once that her Lady was not asleep. She had evidently been reading, for the holy volume was still open, and one hand rested amid its leaves: but even Barbara was astonished when she saw that her attention was spell-bound to the mysterious locket she held in the other hand. The excellent servant, with that true honesty of mind which no education can teach, knowing that her lady had not heard her enter, and feeling, rather than reasoning upon, the indelicacy of prying into what she believed was secret, purposely let fall a chalice, which effectually roused Constance, who, placing the trinket under the pillow, called upon her attendant for her night drink, and then pointed out a particular psalm she wished her to read aloud. It was a holy and a beautiful sight in that quiet chamber: The young and high-born maiden, her head rest-

ing on pillows of the finest cambric; her arms crossed meekly on her bosom, whose gentle breathings moved, without disturbing the folds of her night-tire; her eyes elevated; her lips sufficiently apart to show the small, pearly teeth, glittering in whiteness within their coral nest;—then, as promises of hope and happiness beyond the control of mortality, found voice from Barbara's mouth, a tear would steal down her cheek, unbidden and unnoticed, but not unregistered by that God who knows our griefs, and whose balm is ever for the heavy at heart.

Barbara sat on a writing-stool by the bed-side, supporting the Bible on her knees, while the beams of a golden lamp, placed on a lofty tripod near the foot of the bed, fell directly on the book: the light, however, was not sufficiently powerful to illumine the farthestmost parts of the chamber, whose walls were hung with figured tapestry, the gloom of which contrasted strongly with the bright blue and silver that canopied Constantia's bed.

The next chamber was occupied by her father: it was lofty, but not spacious. The inside of the door was guarded by many bolts; and at the moment his daughter was seeking commune with, and counsel from the Almighty, he was employed in examining and securing them with evident anxiety. First one, and then another, was pushed to its rest; then he turned the key in the lock—once, twice. Having shaken, or rather attempted to shake, the massive door, to determine if it were really secure, Sir Robert Cecil proceeded to inspect the window fastenings; and being convinced they were in their places, he turned to the table where the light burnt brightly, examined a brace of pistols, which he placed under his pillow, and then took down a huge heavy sword from a shelf where it lay concealed, pulled it forth from its scabbard, and applied his thumb along the edge, to be satisfied of its sharpness. Having laid the weapon by his bed-side, he commenced, unaided, to undress. This did not occupy him long, though he stopped occasionally, his eye glancing round the apartment, his ear bent, as if some unhallowed noise had struck upon it suddenly. As he moved to his lonely couch, he passed before an immense glass, in a heavy oaken frame: his own reflection met his eye; he started as if a spectre had crossed his path—his cheek blanched—his knees smote one against the other—his respiration was impeded. At last, waving his hand, as if to dispel the phantom his imagination had conjured up, he sprang into the bed, and buried his head under its pillows.

At the end of the corridor which led to the sleeping-

chambers, was the apartment appropriated to Burrell of Burrell, whenever he was a guest at Cecil Place; his visits, however, were not so frequent, or of such long duration, as might have been expected from the lover of Lady Constance Cecil. He was fast approaching the meridian of life, and his youth had been spent chiefly at court:—at both courts, in fact, for he had been a partisan of the unhappy Charles, and afterwards, at heart, as complete a regicide as any who took a more active part in the terrible transactions of the times. He joined the army of the Parliament, nevertheless, but for a short time, pleading, as an excuse, the necessity there was for remaining amongst his own tenants and thralls to keep them in subjection. Sir Willmott Burrell might well have been designated a man of two characters—one for public, one for private life. His manners to his superiors, and generally to his equals, were bland and insinuating; to his inferiors he was overbearing, haughty, and severe, except when he had some particular point to carry, and then he could cringe to and fawn upon the vilest. He had a peculiar method of entering into men's hearts, and worming from each whatever best suited his own purpose; but the principle upon which he invariably acted, was, to extract the honey from the rose, and then scatter its leaves to the whirlwind and the blast. Devoid of every thing like moral or religious feeling, he used Puritanism as a cloak for selfishness and sin; and though he had often cursed his good character when it stood in the way of his pleasures, yet it was too needful to be cast off as a worthless garment. A plotting mind united to a graceful exterior, is as dangerous to the interests of society as a secret mine to a besieged city, inasmuch as it is impossible to calculate upon the evils that may suddenly arise either from the one or the other.

Sir Willmott Burrell, of Burrell, had managed to make himself acquainted with many of Sir Robert Cecil's secrets; and even those he had not heard he guessed at, with that naturally acute knowledge which is rarely in the wrong. He was too great a sensualist to be indifferent to the beauty of Constance, which, like all sensualists, he considered the sole excellence of woman; but he arraigned the wisdom of Nature in endowing aught so fair with mind, or enriching it with soul; and the dignity and purity of his destined bride, instead of making him proud, made him angry and abashed.

Constance heard of Burrell of Burrell's grace, of Burrell of Burrell's wit, and sometimes—though even amongst ladies it was a disputed point—of his beauty, without ever being

able to discover any thing approaching to these qualities in her future husband; and certainly he never appeared to so little advantage as when in her presence: her eye kept him under a subjection, the force of which he was ashamed to acknowledge; and although there could be no question that his chief desire for the approaching alliance proceeded from a cherished affection for the broad acres and dark woods of the heiress of Cecil, yet he bitterly regretted that the only feeling the lady manifested towards him was one of decided coldness—he almost feared, of contempt. The day after her mother's funeral, she had refused to see him, although he knew that she had been abroad with Lady Frances in the gardens of the Place; and though Sir Robert urged indisposition as the cause, yet his pride was deeply mortified. A weighty communication from France, where he had been a resident for some months, as an *attache* to the English embassy, appeared to have increased the discontent of his already ruffled temper. He retired early to his chamber, and his moody and disturbed countenance looked angered and mysterious by the light of an untrimmed lamp, as he inspected various documents and papers that lay scattered before him on a table of carved oak, inlaid with silver. One letter which he read and re-read with much attention, seemed to excite him more than all the rest: he turned it over and over—examined the seal—laid it down—took it up—put it aside again—folded his arms over his chest, and, with his eyes fixed on the ceiling, appeared for a time absorbed in the remembrance of past events. Finally, he committed the letter to the flames, and then paced up and down the room with unequal steps, his head bent forward, and his arms folded, as before, over his bosom. He was evidently ill at ease with himself, and there gleamed “a lurking devil in his eye,” that augured peril to some one, and bespoke a man who was neither “infirm of purpose,” nor slow in the execution of whatever mischief was designed. He did not retire to his bed until the lamp gave token that its oil was expended, when, flinging himself on the coverlet without removing any portion of his dress, he sought rest.

Nor were Sir Willmott's slumbers of long duration; before the sun had risen, he was up and a-foot. Having let himself down from his window and out at the postern-gate, he took the path that led in the direction of Gull's Nest Crag.

The night had been wild and stormy: the freshness and freedom of the air now compensated for the turmoil that had passed; but the ocean's wrathfulness was still unappeased,

and Burrell listened to its roarings while it lashed the beach with its receding waves, like a war-horse pawing and foaming when the battle din has sunk into the silence that succeeds the shout of victory, as if eager again to meet the shock of death.

Suddenly he struck out of the usual track across a portion of waste land, the utmost verge of which skirted the toppling cliffs: and making for himself a way through tangled fern, long grass, and prickly furze, he strode on in a more direct line towards the dwelling of Robin Hays, pursuing his course, heedless of the petty annoyances he encountered, although his feet were frequently entangled among the stunts and stubs that opposed his progress, with the air of one whose mind was evidently bent on the fulfilment of some hazardous but important purpose. It was so early, that not a shepherd had unpenned his fold, nor a girl gone forth to the milking: such cattle as remained at liberty during the night, still slumbered on the sward; and the wily fox roamed with less caution than was his wont, under the knowledge that no enemy was by to watch his progress.

"I may reach Gull's Nest, and return," thought Burrell; "and that before any in the house are astir." But at that moment, a tall, lank figure, moving with measured pace, yet, nevertheless, approaching rapidly, from the very point towards which his steps were bent, arrested his attention; and as it came nearer and nearer, he was much disconcerted at the discovery that no other than the Reverend Jonas Fleetword, from whom he anticipated a sharp rebuke for his absence from Lady Cecil's funeral, was about to cross his path. He would have gladly hailed the approach of Birnam wood, so it could have settled down between him and the reverend Jonas; but as no place of refuge was at hand, he bethought him of the shield of patience, drew his cloak as closely as if he were about to encounter a fierce north wind, and, finally, returned, with much courtesy, the salutation of the preacher, whose apt and ready eloquence had obtained for him the significant appellation of Fleetword. The locks of the divine, according to the approved fashion, had been cropped closely round his head, and his thin sharp visage looked of most vinegar-like tinge and character, peering, as it now did, from beneath a steeple-crowned hat, of formal cut. He wore a black cloth cloak and doublet, his Flemish breeches and hose were of the same sombre hue, and his square-toed shoes were surmounted by large crape roses. Contrary, as it would seem, to the custom of a disciple of the peace-loving Saviour, he also wore a basket-handled sword, girded round his loins by a broad strap of black

leather. In truth, face, figure, and all included, he was as harsh and ill-favoured a person as could have been encountered even at that day,—one whose lips would have seemed to taint the blessing to which he might have given utterance; and graceless as Burrell of Burrell undoubtedly was, there was excuse for the impatience he felt at such an unlucky rencontre.

"It augurs well to see one whom the Lord hath blessed with all the creature-comforts of life, thus early aroused from sluggish sloth, and abroad, doubtless, on business of the faithful-minded?"

Burrell made the best reply he could, without confirming or denying the inference drawn from his early rising.

"Why tarried ye from the gathering of God's people on account of the Lady Cecilia's funeral? I pray that the flesh-pots of Egypt may not lure ye to perdition; or fine gold from Ophir, or the vain glories of sinful men, pilot ye unto destruction!"

"It was business connected with the state—commands from his Highness' own lips, that detained me."

"All praise to the Providence that has given his chosen people into such keeping as the Lord Oliver's! Truly may he be likened to the chariots and horsemen of Israel—to the blessed Zerubbabel, who restored the true worship, which the Jews in their blindness had cast from them; to Joshua, whom the Lord appointed as a scourge to the wicked Canaanites; to Moses, who gave both spiritual help and carnal food to those that needed; to Gideon; to Elijah; to David; to Hezekiah; to the most wise Solomon; to all the holy of the earth!" and, exhausted by the rapidity with which he had uttered the names of the kings and prophets of old, the worthy Jonas made a full stop; not with any intention of concluding his harangue, but to take breath for its continuation. As time, however, was exceedingly precious to Burrell, he endeavoured to give such a turn to the conversation as would enable him to escape from the preacher's companionship; and, therefore, expressed a very deep regret that he had not been edified by the discourse which Mr. Fleetword so ably delivered, and inquired when and where it was likely he would next give his holy lessons, so that he might be comforted by the oil and honey that flowed from his lips.

"Thou sayest truly," replied the energetic preacher; "truly sayest thou: oil and honey for the faithful, the holy, the just, in our New Jerusalem! But what, what for the unbelievers?—what for the wise in their own conceit!—what for the dwellers in Kedar!—Even this—to them, my words signify bitterness, a scourge, a pestilence, an uproot-

ing, and a scattering by the four winds of heaven! on them shall the seventh phial be poured out; for verily the Lord is weary of showing mercy to the backsliders from the congregation: they shall all perish—their limbs shall be broken asunder—yea, I will smite the uncircumcised Philistines—yea, I will smite—”

“Even as did Samson of old,” interrupted Burrell—“even as Samson of old smote them—with the jawbone of an ass.”

“Even so,” replied Jonas, who, with all his bitterness, was nothing worse than a simple-minded enthusiast, and never imagined that Sir Willmott’s words could convey aught than approbation of his zeal, and the right spirit that dwelt within him;—“even so; and it rejoiceth me to find thee apt and prompt in scriptural passages. Verily, I am glad of thy company; and as thou regrettest that the world’s business prevented thy attendance on the lamented dead, I care not if I bestow this my present leisure unto thy edification, and repeat, nay, even enlarge upon, the words I then delivered; which exercise will be finished before mid-day—it is right that we labour unceasingly in the vineyard.” So saying, he drew from his bosom a clasped Bible, and to Burrell’s dismay, actually gave out the text, before he could resolve upon any plan to rid himself of the intruder, whom he heartily wished at Tophet, if not farther.

“My worthy friend, I would postpone the instruction you would give, until a more convenient season; I have urgent business to attend, and must hasten its performance.”

“Then will I gird up my loins, and accompany thee unto the very threshold of the house where thou wouldst enter; and as we walk, I can still convey the precious ointment of grace unto thy soul.”

“The merciless old scoundrel!” muttered Burrell between his teeth; then adding aloud, “Not so; your words are too costly to be given unto the winds; and I cannot tarry so as to drink in the full draught of satisfaction: let be, I pray you, and come down to Cecil Place to-night, or on the morrow, and then many can worship with thee.”

Fleetword paused, still holding the volume in his hand:—“Besides,” continued Burrell, “what I have to accomplish is the Lord’s work.”

“The Lord’s work—the Lord’s work!” repeated Fleetword.—“then go forth; why didst thou not confirm me that before? and I would have hastened, not retarded thee; for, of a verity, my outward man warreth with the inward, and these supporters of the flesh,” pointing with his fore-

finger to the thin and meagre limbs that scarcely merited the compliment, "grow weary in well doing."

Burrell needed not a second hint to hasten, but proceeded on his way, after receiving Fleetword's benediction with all due humility.

The preacher remained some time on the spot, and his thin upright figure, seen from a distance, its outline so strongly marked against the cold gray morning sky, had a singular effect. Burrell had plunged into a dell or hollow, so that he was no longer visible.

The bleak and unclothed landscape, from which the mist was slowly rolling; the few giant trees, that dwelling by the sea-side, and grown wise by experience, ventured not to put forth their leaves till the sun had chased the north wind to his caves; but, above all, the booming of the untranquillized ocean, might have chilled a heart within the warmest bosom;

"Yet, prophet-like, that lone one stood,  
With dauntless words and high,"

and looked as if he deemed the rolling clouds his listeners. It was by no means unusual for the preachers in those days to exercise their voice over the hills and heaths of their native land: valuing, as they did, power and strength far more than melody and grace, they endeavoured to acquire them by every possible means—nor were they without hope that, (to use their own language,) "the Almighty might bless the seed thus sown, seeing that it was hard to know who might not be within hearing of the precious word."

Burrell soon gained the sea-shore, though he was still a considerable distance from Gull's Nest Crag. On arriving at a point that commanded an unbroken prospect of the far-spread sea, he shaded his eyes with his hand, and looked long and earnestly along the waste of waters. Apparently the scrutiny was unsuccessful, for he drew a telescope from beneath his cloak and gazed through it for some minutes, directing it towards several points. At length, with an impatience of manner in which, when with his inferiors or alone, he frequently indulged, he descended the cliff and pursued his way along the beach. As he drew near the little public-house, his ears were greeted by the sound of one of Waller's most popular songs, warbled in a voice so sweet, so pipe-like, that he paused, and looked round to ascertain from whence it proceeded. It ceased. Not even his keen eye could rest on aught resembling human form. He hallooed, but received no answer: yet had he not continued



three steps on his way when the song was renewed, as he thought, directly over his head; notwithstanding the roaring of the waves, he even heard the words distinctly—

“Small is the worth  
Of beauty from the light retired.”

Again he shouted; and a loud and elfin laugh, that danced with the echoes from crag to crag and billow to billow, was sent forth in reply.

“Mermaid—Mermaid—or Demon! where be ye?” cried Burrell, loudly.

“Even here,—master mine,” answered Robin Hays, shaking his large head, over a midway and partly detached portion of the cliff.

“Come down, do, you will-o'-the-wisp! In heaven's name, what takes you into such breakneck places?”

“The same matter that brings you here, sir,” replied Robin, skipping and crawling alternately, suiting his motions to the inequality of the place: “the very same matter that brings you here—a woman.”

“How know you that, master prate-a-pace? At all events, you have no woman there.”

“Why, master, seeing you were born under the planet Venus, your whole trouble must be of her making; and, as to there being no woman up here, that matters nothing, for woman's fancy mounts higher than e'er a cliff in England; and to gain their favours we must humour their fancy. A certain damsel that I know, had a curiosity to see a peewit's eggs; so I thought I'd find her some, and here they are.” From a pouch made of untanned leather, which hung in front like an apron, he took two small eggs of a greenish hue, spotted with black.

“What a fool you are,” exclaimed Burrell, “to risk your neck for such trumpery! It would be long ere you would risk it for your master.”

“I have known many hazard theirs for a less cause—and, to say the truth, there's a deal to be learned from the wild sea-birds,” replied Robin, as if he had not heard the latter portion of the sentence; “I have a regard for the creatures, which are like kings in the air. Many an hour have I sat up yonder, listening to the noises of earth and the noises of heaven, while the shrill note of the gull, the chatter of the guillemot, the heron's bitter scream, the hoarse croaking of the cormorant, have been all around me: and, indeed, the birds know me well enough. There's a pair of old gulls—”

"Robin! I did not come here to talk about cormorants and gulls; I want to ask you a question, and I expect an honest answer."

Robin made the nearest approach to a bow he was ever guilty of.

"Honesty, Robin, is a most valuable quality."

"So it is, sir—and, like all valuables, ought to fetch a good price."

"You should be a disciple of Manasseh Ben Israel! Why, you have hardly left my service two days, and then I had a right to your honesty. You are as bad as a Jew."

"If so, I have surely a right to extort money from a Christian."

"A truce to your jests, you ill-favoured loon: I want no man's labour for nothing—there are some broad pieces to stop your mouth; and now, when saw you Hugh Dalton?"

"Not since I had the honour to wait upon you, sir, to London."

"But he is off the coast."

"Under favour, sir, that accounts for my not seeing him on it."

"Scoundrel!" exclaimed Burrell fiercely; "no such mummery with me, or I'll soon put you upon salt-water rations. Dalton, I say, is off the coast; I would speak with him, I *must* speak with him; and, as I have good reason to know you telegraph each other, manage so that he meet me under the cavern: do you understand, you sprat-spawn! Under the cavern; to-morrow night, at eleven; we can serve each other." Burrell, when he had retraced his steps about five yards, turned round and added, "You owe me amends for your base desertion the night before last, which I have not forgotten."

Robin, cap in hand, watched his receding footsteps with an underlook; and then, attended by his faithful Crisp, repaired to the cottage, where a cannikin of porridge, seasoned by the hand of his mother with good spicery, and more than half composed of double-dub, awaited his arrival.

## CHAPTER VI.

"By the pricking of my thumbs,  
Something wicked this way comes."

SHAKESPEARE.

THERE is nothing in England so variable as its climate. Before the succeeding night, the very remembrance of the storm seemed to have passed away from the placid waters, which now slept in the moonbeams as tranquilly as a cradled child; the sea-bird's scream no longer whistled through the air, and the small waves murmured their gentle music along the strand. Nature was hushed and happy; but the tranquillity of external objects had little effect upon the mind of Burrell, as he strode to his trysting with the bold Buccaneer. Yet were there no outward tokens that he apprehended aught from the meeting; for, excepting the sword, usually borne by persons of all ranks and professions during the dynasty of Oliver, he was completely unarmed. The place appointed was appropriately described as "Under the Cavern." It was known to Dalton's more intimate associates, and the Cavaliers, who had from time to time obtained security therein; but, if its bare, bleak walls had been gifted with speech, they might have rehearsed such tales of rapine and plunder as few writers would venture to record. The cavern appeared, to those who might wander along the sea-shore, to be but a deep and natural excavation into a huge rock, the western extremity of which ran out into the ocean, and therefore compelled the traveller to ascend a kind of artificial steps, in order to pass to the other side: the beach was, consequently, but little frequented, as leading to no necessary point, and as the inhabitants of the adjoining cottage, with which our readers are already familiar, had taken especial care to form several paths in various directions from its door, but none leading down to this part of the neighbouring cliffs, it was but rarely that the whiteness of the rocks was defaced by any foot save that of the daring bird from whom it received its name, and by whom it was regarded as his own natural and undisputed property.

Whether the cavern into which we are about to enter was originally framed by some freak of nature, or was the invention and subsequent accomplishment of art, we are unable to determine. Like many a structure better formed to endure for ages, it has been long swept away by the encroachments of the sea, which, since the period we write of, has been gradually gaining upon the land. Even at the present moment, there are old men dwelling in the neighbourhood who can remember houses and cornfields where now a proud ship may ride at anchor. From time to time, without the slightest warning, some immense rock falls, and mingles with the ocean, which soon dashes aside every trace of its existence, leaving merely a new surface, to vanish in its turn under the influence of a power, silent and patient, but inevitable and unconquerable.

Immediately as the moonlight was left behind, the cavern became high and arched, as if either nature, or some skillful workman under her superintendence, had foreseen to what important purposes it might be applied. Huge masses of flint, and still larger fragments of granite, were scattered about as if by giant hands, yet without any seeming attention, to order or regularity. The initiated, however, well knew that such was not the case. Burrell, immediately on entering, proceeded to the farther extremity, and kneeling, placed his mouth to the ground, and gave a loud, sharp whistle: he then stood erect, at a little distance from the spot on which he had knelt. Presently, what appeared a lump of gray stone, moved upwards, then aside, and the head and shoulders of a man from beneath, sprang into its place so suddenly, as to have appeared the work of magic. He leaned a little on one side, to permit Burrell to descend; and the next minute the cavern seemed as if no human step had ever disturbed its solitude. Six or eight rugged stairs brought the knight into a low but spacious apartment, from which there was no apparent exit except by an arched doorway, where the commencement of a spiral ascent was visible, leading almost perpendicularly into the secret room of the widow Hays' small hostelry, in which our acquaintance, Jack Roupall, and his friends had been concealed, and which, it may be here stated, served other purposes than to afford comfort and entertainment to the wayfarer.

It may also be observed, that, if at any time the widow's house was suspected of harbouring dangerous or outlawed persons, and consequent search was made under its roof, those to whom concealment was either convenient or necessary, had a ready sanctuary in the cavern beneath, where they might either tarry until assured of safety, or whence

they could easily escape on board one of the free traders, which rarely passed a week without a call of inquiry at some point along the coast. The cavern was, therefore, known to many, for many were they to whom it had been a shelter and a safeguard. Not so the inner temple (if we may so apply the term) to which Burrell now sought admission through a door, with the nature of which only some half a dozen were acquainted. To them the secret had necessarily been confided, but under the most awful oaths of secrecy, and a terrible pledge that the life of him who might reveal it was to be at all times and in all places at the disposal of any one of those who shared with him a knowledge so fearful.

The door before which Burrell paused, was, in its way, a masterpiece of art: it consisted of a mass of clay and flint, so skilfully put together, that the most acute searcher, even though he possessed the certainty of its existence somewhere, must have failed to discover it from among the natural lining of the rude but extensive cave. A low and gentle whistle was answered by a like signal, and the door was drawn gradually inwards, until sufficient space was afforded to permit Burrell to pass into a large space, but less raw and wild than that from which he had just entered.

In one corner of this singular hall, rose a motley pile of musketry, rifles, hand-grenades, basket and cross-bitted swords, steel cuirasses, which, from their rude and sullied condition, appeared to have suffered much and hard service; buff, and other coloured doublets, breast-plates, shoulder-belts, with gilt and plain buckles; manacles, some rusty, others of glittering brightness: the muzzle of a small brass swivel projected from beneath a number of flags and emblems of various nations, rolled together with a degree of amity to which their former owners had long been strangers. Over these again were heaped cloaks, caps, feathers, and trappings, enough to form the stock wardrobe of any theatre, present, or to come. Nor were there wanting thumb-screws and other instruments of torture, often unsparingly exercised upon those who hid their treasure, or retained secrets they were desired to betray. Near to this miscellaneous assemblage rose another heap, the base of which appeared to consist of some half score of elephants' teeth, rough hemp, fragments of huge cable, cable-yarn, and all manner of cordage; rolls of lewixens, matrons, and leopard-skins; wolf-skins, "tawed, and untawed;" girdles of silk, velvet, and leather; and on pegs, immediately over, hung half a dozen mantles of miniver, and some wide robes of the pure spotted ermine. Upon a huge sea-chest

were heaped bales of costly Brabant, Overysels, and other rare linens, mingled with French and Italian lawns of the finest texture; Turkish camlets, satins of China and Luca, plain and wrought, and many other expensive and highly-taxed articles. Delicious odours were diffused through the chamber from various cases of perfume, musk, ambergris, and the costly attar; while along the north wall were ranged different-sized casks of Nantz brandy, Hollands, and Jamaica rum; giving to the whole the appearance of a vast storehouse. An enormous chafing-dish, filled with burning charcoal, stood near the centre, and, in a deep iron pan was placed a keg of oil, a hole having been driven into its head, through which a sort of hempen wick had been introduced; it flared and blazed like an overgrown flambeau, throwing a warm and glowing light over the entire wild yet well-filled apartment.

But the most singular portion of the garniture of this most singular cave consisted of a number of "Oliver's Acts," pinned or nailed against the walls. If Dalton had been Lord Chief Justice, he could not have displayed a more minute attention to the products of legal sittings than distinguished his private chamber: here was set forth on goodly parchment, "An Act for the Security of his Highness the Lord Protector, his person, and Continuance of the Nation in Peace and Safety;" there, "An Act for Renouncing and Disannulling the pretended Title of Charles Stuart, &c., at the Parliament begun at Westminster the 17th day of September, anno Domini 1656," with the names "Henry Hills" and "John Field, Printers to his Highness the Lord Protector," in large letters at the bottom, together with divers others, chiefly, however, relating to the excise.

Hugh Dalton rose from his seat, and laid his enormous pipe on a pile of ebony logs, that answered the purpose of a table, when Sir Willmott Burrell saluted him with more civility than he usually bestowed upon inferiors: but, despite his outlawry, and the wild course his life had taken, there was a firm, bold, and manly bearing about the Buccaneer, which might have overawed far stouter hearts than the heart of the Master of Burrell. His vest was open, and his shirt-collar thrown back, so as to display to advantage the fine proportions of his chest and neck. His strongly-marked features had at all times an expression of fierceness which was barely redeemed from utter ferocity by a pleasant smile that usually played around a well-formed mouth; but when anger was uppermost, or passion was subdued by contempt, those who came within reach of his influence, more dreaded the rapid motion or the sarcastic curl of his lip, than the ter-

rible flashing of eyes that were proverbial, even among the reckless and desperate men of whom he was the chief, in name, in courage, and in skill. His forehead was unusually broad; thick and bushy brows overhung the long lashes of his deeply-set eyes, around which there was a dark line, apparently less the effect of nature than of climate. The swarthy hue of his countenance was relieved by a red tinge on either cheek; but a second glance might have served to convince the gazer that it was the consequence of unchecked dissipation, not a token of ruddy health. Indeed, notwithstanding the fine and manly character of his form and countenance, both conveyed an idea of a mind ill at ease, of a conscience smitten by the past and apprehensive of the future, yet seeking consolation in the knowledge of good that had been effected, and of more that remained to be done. Years of crime had not altogether obliterated a natural kindness of heart; he appeared as one who had outraged society and its customs in a thousand forms, yet who knew there was that within him by which he was entitled to ask and expect a shelter within her sanctuary; and when a deep flush would pass over his features, and his blood grow chill at the recollection of atrocities at which the sufferers in a score of lands had shuddered as they talked, he endeavoured to still the voice that reproached him, by placing to the credit of his fearful account some matters to which we may hereafter more distinctly refer.

It was before such a man that Burrell of Burrell now stood, and by whom he was addressed.

"My piping-bird, good sir, told me you wanted me; and though somewhat inconvenient at this present time, here I am. Won't you sit? This is no lady's lounging room; yet we can find seats, and costly ones too," he added, pushing a chest of spices towards his visitor.

"Then you were not at sea, Captain?" observed Burrell, seating himself, and unclasping his cloak.

"I did not say so," replied the other, bringing his bushy brows more closely over his eyes, and glancing suspiciously upon the questioner.

"Oh, no; I only imagined it."

"Well, sir, I was not at sea, and I care not who knows it."

"But, my worthy friend, we have been acquainted too long for you to fear my 'peaching' aught concerning you or your doings."

"And did I talk of fear?" inquired the Buccaneer, with a droll and yet bitter expression. "Well, if I did, I only follow, as Robin would say, the example of my betters, by talking about what I don't understand."

"Vastly good, and true!—true as the——"

"Needle to the pole; the finest simile in nature, Sir Willmott Burrell: you were fishing for a holy one, I saw, which is what these walls don't often hear, for we've no ladders nor warpes among us."

"You've enlarged this room, and improved it much, Captain, since I last saw it."

"Humph! ay, that was, I remember, when his Highness——"

"Hush!" interrupted Burrell, changing colour, and looking round the room cautiously; "you must be very careful, Dalton, how you say any thing about——"

"Ha! ha! ha! So you look for a troop of old Noll's Ironsides to bounce from under these packages in this good Isle of Shepey; or, mayhap, expect to see him start forth from behind his own Acts, which you perceive garnish my walls—the walls of my secret palace, so splendidly; but I may talk about his Highness, ay, and about the prisoners you escorted here, despite the loyal men of Kent; for me to ship to the Colonies—and—But no matter, no matter; Noll knew I did it, for he knows every thing. Well, sir, you seem so alarmed, that I'm dumb as a sand-bank; only this, his Highness is far enough off to-night, and you need fear no other Olivers, for England will never see but one."

"True, true—good Dalton!—but tell me, are you often on the French coast now?"

"Yes, I'm grown old, and, though my little Fire-fly is still bright and beautiful, and her ivories as biting, her guns, sir, as musical as ever, yet I'm done with the Colonies; they ruin a man's morals and his health; but I do a little, just by way of amusement, or practice, with Flanders and France, and a run now and then to Lisbon."

"How long is it since you've been to St. Vallery?"

"Some time now; I was at Dieppe last month, and that is very near."

"Dalton, you must make St. Vallery before this moon is out, and execute a little commission for me."

"Very good, sir; we have never disputed about terms. What is it? any thing in the way of silks, or——"

"It is flesh, human flesh, Dalton."

"Ah!" exclaimed the Buccaneer, rising and recoiling from the knight, "I've had enough of that, and I'll have no more. Sir Willmott Burrell, you must seek out another man."

"Now, Dalton," said Burrell, in his most insinuating tone, "you have not yet heard me, and I take it very unhandsome of an old friend like you to start off in such a



manner without knowing why or wherefore. The matter is simply this—a girl, a silly girl, somehow or other got attached to me while I was in France. I have received letter upon letter, talking of her situation, and so forth, and threatening various things; amongst others, to come over here, unless—the idiot!—I acknowledge her as my wife. Now, you know, or perhaps you do not know, that I am betrothed to the daughter of Sir Robert Cecil; and, if I must enter into the holy state, why, she is a maiden to be proud of. I have arranged it thus—written to my fair Zillah to get to St. Vallery by a particular day, the date of which I will give you, and told her that a vessel waits to convey her to England. You, Dalton, must guide that vessel, and—— But you understand me; words between friends are needless."

"The cargo for exportation; Barbadoes perhaps——"

"Or——" and Burrell pointed with his finger downwards, though, when he raised his eye to encounter that of the Buccaneer, it was quickly withdrawn.

"Indeed, Burrell!" exclaimed Dalton, in a tone of abhorrence, "you are a greater villain than I took you for! Why can't you pay off the girl—send her somewhere—gild the crime?"

"Gold is no object with her, she desires honour."

The sympathetic cord of the Buccaneer's heart was touched, for the sentiment echoed his own.

"Then, who is she?" he demanded; "I'll not stir in it, unless I know all."

Burrell paused for a moment, and then said,—

"You have heard of Manasseh Ben Israel, a rabbi, whom it hath pleased a great personage to distinguish with much kindness: nay, his mercy has gone so far as to contemplate receiving that unholy people into commune with us, giving them the right-hand of fellowship, and suffering them to taste of the waters——"

"Spritsail and rigging!" interrupted the Buccaneer, whose enraged spirit sought some outlet, "No conventicle lingo here—you forget your company, Sir Willmott. What of the Jew?"

"You know his Highness has strangely favoured this man, and that he is much thought of. It is now more than six months since I was intrusted with a commission to Paris, and Ben Israel requested I would take charge of some packages he desired to forward to his daughter. She resided with a family whom I knew to be Polish Jews, but who conformed to the Catholic faith, and quieted the conscience of a certain Cardinal by liberal offerings of silver

and of gold. I discharged the commission in person, and must confess that the little black-eyed maid, seated as I first saw her, on crimson cushions of rich Genoa velvet, and nearly enveloped in a veil starred with precious gems, looked more like a *houri* than a woman. She pleased me mightily: and, as I had a good deal of time on my hands, I trifled it with her. This might have done well; we might have gone on pleasantly enough, but the creature was as jealous as a she tiger, and as revengeful too. I made acquaintance with a blue-eyed Dane at the court, and, can you believe it? she tracked my footsteps in disguise, and would have stabbed me to the heart, had I not wrenched the dagger from her little hand. She pretended to be sorry for it: and, though I never trusted her, our intimacy was renewed, until I was recalled. Particular necessities for money pressing upon me, I saw that no time was to be lost in fulfilling my contract with Sir Robert Cecil's daughter.—My Jewess, however, thinks otherwise: declares she will follow me here; that if I do her not justice, she will brave her father's anger, avow her intimacy with a Christian—(which, I believe, they invariably punish by death,) and forward what she calls proofs of my guilt to the Lord Protector. You perceive, Dalton, the creature is dangerous."

"But what *can* she forward to Oliver?"

"Why, she was starch, and—you comprehend me—I was obliged to submit to a species of marriage ceremony; and there was a certificate and some letters. In short, Captain, knowing his Highness's strictness—knowing his wish to conciliate this Ben Israel, and feeling the expediency of my immediate marriage, I tell you it would be certain destruction to suffer her to appear now."

"Then I must ship her off, so that she may never return," observed the Buccaneer, with a fierce knitting of his brows.

"Dalton, you know not what a devil she is: were she gentle, or a fond idiot, she could be managed; but she has the spirit, the foresight of a thousand women. Besides, I swore, when her hand was lifted against my life, that I would be revenged, and I never yet swore in vain.

Dalton looked upon Burrell's really handsome features, contracted and withered by the pestilence of a demoniac spirit, and loathed him from his very soul.

"I can't, Sir Wilmott, I can't; flesh and blood must rise against the destruction of a loving woman. I won't, so help me God! and that's enough."

"Very well—very well—but I'll have blood for blood; breach for breach, master; the Ironsides, Cromwell's tender pets, would have nice picking here. The Protector has al-

ready a scent of your whereabouts; he is one who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Let the bold Buccaneer look to it, and I'll straight seek some less *honest* man to do my bidding."

"Heave over such jargon," replied Dalton, upon whom Burrell's threats seemed to have made no impression. "Suppose you did betray me, how many days' purchase would your life be worth? Think ye there are no true hearts and brave, who would sacrifice their own lives to avenge the loss of mine? Avast, Master of Burrell! you are old enough to know better."

"And you ought to know better than to sail against the wind. Why, man, the little Jewess is freighted with jewels; a very queen of diamonds. And I care not for them: you may keep them all—so——" The villain's lip faltered, he feared to speak of the deed his heart had planned. Dalton made no reply, but covered his face with his hand, leaning his elbow on the table. Burrell took advantage of his silence, to urge the riches of the rabbi's daughter, the presents he himself would give, and wound up the discourse with protests loud and earnest of everlasting gratitude. Dalton let him speak on, but still maintained an inflexible silence.

"Sdeath, man!" exclaimed Burrell, hastily, after a pause of some minutes, "art asleep, or stupid?"

"Neither," replied the Buccaneer. "But I will do your bidding. Now, write your directions,—here are pens, ink, paper, all that you require,—and my reward;—write, sir, and then good night." Burrell did so, while Dalton paced up and down his den, as if meditating and arranging some action of importance. All matters being agreed upon, apparently to the satisfaction of both, they were about to separate, when Burrell inquired—

"Did you land any Cavaliers lately?"

"Not I; they are but a bad freight; broad pieces are a scarce commodity with Charlie's friends."

"Very strange. I met a braggart the other night, but I dare say he was one of the Syndercomb gang. His Highness imagines you conveyed some of them to their headquarters."

"Does he?"

"Master Dalton, you are close."

"Master Burrell, I have agreed to do your business."

"Well!"

"I mean it to be well. Consequently, I have not agreed to tell you mine."

Burrell looked daggers for a moment, and then turned off with a hasty step and a forced laugh.

"Blasted be my hand for touching his in the way of amity!" exclaimed the Buccaneer, striking the table with a violence that echoed through the room. "The cold-blooded, remorseless villain! She is too good for such a sacrifice—I must be at work. And so, one infamy at a time is not enough for the sin-dealing land lubber; he wanted to worm out of me—Robin! ahoy! Robin!"

Dalton stepped to the outside of the still open door; and on the instant descended from the communicating stair, leading to the Gull's nest, not Robin, but him of the gray steed and black cloak, who was so near falling a victim to Burrell's treachery on a recent occasion.

## CHAPTER VII.

For guilty states do ever bear  
The pledges about them, which they have deserved,  
And, till those plagues do get above  
The mountain of our faults, and there do sit,  
We see them not. Thus, still we love  
The evil we do, until we suffer it.

BEN JONSON.

THE Buccaneer welcomed the young man with greater warmth than is usually displayed, except to near and dear connexions. It must be remembered also, he had arrived at that period of life when feelings of affection and friendship stagnate somewhat in the veins, and curdle into apathy.—Few are there who have numbered fifty winters without wondering what could have set their blood boiling and their hearts beating so warmly some few years before. A benison upon a smiling lip, a kindly eye, and a cheerful voice!—whether they belong to the young or to the old—may all such true graces be long preserved from the blight called “Knowledge of the world;” which, while bestowing information with the one hand, takes away innocence and hope with the other!—But to the story.

The young Cavalier greeted his associate more as a friend than a companion: there was evidently between them that good understanding which, arising from acquaintance with the better points of character, produces mutual esteem; and although there was a degree of deference paid to Hugh Dalton by the youth, it seemed a compliment to his age and experience, gracefully and naturally rendered, and kindly and thankfully received. It was obvious that Dalton so considered it; receiving attention far less as his due, than as a voluntary offering for which he desired to show his gratitude.

There was, nevertheless, something of pity mingled with regard, which the youth manifested towards his chafed companion, as he took the seat that had been occupied by Burrell, and, laying his hand upon the powerful arm of the Buccaneer, inquired, in a touching and anxious tone, if aught had particularly disturbed him.

"Walter—no, nothing very particular; for knavery and villany are seldom rare, and I have been long accustomed to treat with both; only it's too bad to have more unclean spirits than one's own, harpying and haunting a man. However, I can breathe better now that fellow's gone. Ah, master Walter! there be two sorts of villains in the world: one with a broad, bronzed face, a bold loud voice, a drinking look, and an unsheathed dagger—and him men avoid and point at, and children cling to their mothers' skirts as he passes by:—the other is masked from top to toe; his step is slow, his voice harmonized, his eye vigilant, but well trained; he wears his dagger in his bosom, and crosses his hands thereon as if in piety, but it is, in truth, that his hold may be firm and his stab sure; yet the world know not that, and they trust him, and he is singled out as a pattern-man for youth to follow; and so—But we all play parts—all, all! And now for a stave of a song: Hurrah for the free-trade!—a shout for the brave Buccaneers!—a pottle of sack!—and now, sir, I am myself again! The brimstone smell of that dark ruffian nearly overpowered me!" So saying, he passed his hand frequently over his brows, attempting at the same time to laugh away his visible emotion.

"It will not do!" said the young man, whom Dalton had addressed by the name of Walter; "something has disturbed you; surely, Captain, I may ask what it is?"

"Some fifty years ago I had a father," replied the Buccaneer, looking earnestly in the youth's face; "he was an aged man then, for he did not marry until he was old, and my mother was beautiful, and quitted his side; but that does not matter, only it shows how, as my poor father had nothing else to love, he loved me with the full tenderness of a most affectionate nature. He was a clergyman, too, and a firm royalist; one of those devoted royalists, as regarded both God and King, who would submit, for their sakes, to the stake or the block with rapture at being thought worthy to make the sacrifice. Well, I was wild and wilful, and even then would rather steal a thing than gain it by lawful means: not that I would have stolen aught to keep it, for I was generous enough; but I loved the danger and excitement of theft, and on the occasion I speak of, I had taken some apples from a neighbouring tree belonging to a poor woman. It was evening when I took this unlucky fruit, and not knowing a safe place in which to deposite it, I was restless and disturbed all night. The next day, from a cause I could not guess at, my father would not suffer me to go out, and was perpetually, on some pretext or other, going to and from the cupboard where my

treasure had been placed. I was agony, and as night again closed in; the agitation and anxiety I had suffered made me ill and pale. My dear father drew near him the little oak table that was set apart for the Bible, and opening it, said he had that day composed a sermon for my especial case. I dreaded that my apple-stealing had been discovered, and I was right, though he did not say so: he enlarged in sweet and simple language upon his text—it was this:—‘There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’ Walter, Walter! the old man has been many years in his grave, and I have been as many, a reckless wanderer over the face of the wild earth and still wilder sea; but I have never done a deed of blood and plunder, that those words have not echoed—echoed in my ears, struck upon my heart like the fiend’s curse: yet,” he added in a subdued accent, “it was no cursing lips pronounced them: I have been the curse to the holy words, not they the curse to me.”

“I never before heard you speak of your father,” observed the youth.

“I do not like to speak of him; I ran off to sea when I was about ten years old, and when I came back he was dead. There was war enough in England at that time to occupy my active nature: I first joined the King’s party, and had my share of wounds and glory at Gainsborough, where I fought with and saw poor Cavendish killed by that devil Cromwell. It was at that same battle his successes began: he had a brave horse-regiment there of his countrymen, most of them freeholders and freeholders’ sons, who upon matter of conscience engaged in this quarrel under him. It was there he ousted us with his canting. Gadzooks! they went as regularly to their psalm-singing as they had been in a conventicle; and thus, d’ye see, being armed after their own fanatical fashion within, and without by the best iron armour, they stood as one man, firmly, and charged as one man, desperately.—But we have other things to talk of than him or me; so sit down, young gentleman, and let’s hear the news;—or, stay, Robin must first bring us some wine—my warehouse is full of it; I must wash down the poison that fellow has crammed into my throat. Ah! ah! ah! what chafes me is, that, from my d—d reputation, greater villains than myself thrust me forward to do their work, and think they have a right to storm and stare if I have conscience in any thing. But I’ll be even with them all, yet—with one in particular. That villain!—shall that far greater villain have peace? ‘There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.’”

He summoned Robin, who placed on the table some meat

and wine, and other matters that supplied a pretty substantial supper: a ceremony, the rendering justice to which affords us sufficient leisure to examine the form and features of the young Cavalier, who, having laid aside his enormous cloak, reclined on some piles of foreign cloths with an ease and grace that belongs only to those of gentle blood. Amid the bustle and occupation of life, it is a simple matter for people of ordinary rank to assure the bearing of the well-bred; but repose is the true criterion of a gentleman or lady, inasmuch as there is then no motion to take off from an ungraceful attitude or an awkward mien. The features of the Cavalier were almost too high for beauty; and had it not been for a playful smile that frequently flitted across his countenance, elongating his moustache, softening and blending the hard lines that even at four-and-twenty had deepened into furrows; he would have been pronounced of severe aspect. Bright golden hair clustered in rich curls over his forehead, and fell a little on either cheek, giving a picturesque character to the form of the head. His eyes appeared of a dark gray, but they were so much sunk, so overshadowed by his forehead, as to leave one in doubt as to their exact colour. His figure was unusually tall and well-formed, and his whole bearing was more that of an accomplished gentleman than of a cut-and-slash cavalier: his manner was neither reckless nor daring, but it was firm and collected. His dress was composed of the finest black cloth, with a black velvet doublet; and his sword-hilt glittered with diamonds.

Robin did not attempt to place himself at the same table, but sat back on a lower seat, and at a little distance, sharing his repast with Crisp, who had scrambled down the stairs after his master, and looked ugly enough to be, what he certainly was, an extraordinary canine genius.

Dalton and Walter laboured under no restraint because of the presence of Robin; on the contrary, he occasionally shared in the conversation, and his opinion upon various topics was frequently asked: indeed, he was fond of bestowing it gratuitously, and seemed highly pleased when called upon to express it.

"Didst hear, Robin, when Blake was expected off Sheerness with the Spanish prizes?"

"In a few days, it is said, he will either bring or send them; but my own thought is, that it will be about a week, neither more nor less, before any ship arrives."

"I must get off for the French coast in a day or two," said Dalton; "and I do not care to return until Blake with his train go up the river a bit; for it's foul sailing athwart the brave old boy: he's the only man living I'd strike flag to."



"And who has the care of the Fire-fly now you're ashore?" inquired the Cavalier.

"Why, Jeromio."

"I don't like him," said Robin, bluntly: "foreigners are good slaves, but bad masters to us English: I'd rather trust the ship to little Spring."

"He is a mere boy, and too bad a sailor; besides, he is grown so superstitious, swears the devil came to him one night I placed him a watch on yon cliff. I must leave him ashore with you, Robin, and tell you what to do with the scapegrace, if I am not back by a particular day. I must also give you a letter to take to Sir Robert Cecil, postponing an appointment I had made with him."

"You had better give the letter to that gentleman," exclaimed Robin, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to where the Cavalier sat; "he would do an errand to Cecil Place, especially if it were to the Lady Constance, right gladly."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Dalton, fixing his quick eye on the youth's countenance, that betrayed uneasiness but not displeasure. "Sits the wind in that quarter? But tell us, Robin, how was it?"

"There is nothing to tell, Captain," interrupted Walter, "except that Robin accompanied me to the Place, as it is called, to show me some alterations, and point out the excellent order in which the trees are kept; and in the grounds we encountered Mistress Cecil, and, as I am informed, the Lady Cromwell."

"I wish you would keep close here though," muttered Dalton; "you'll be meeting the villain Burrell before——"

"I would fain encounter Sir Willmott Burrell once again, and make him pay the traitor's forfeit."

"Peace—peace; give Burrell rope enough to hang himself. He'll swing as high as Haman ere long. Robin told me of the coward's treachery."

"I wish Robin had not accompanied him to London," exclaimed Walter; "I hate people to carry two faces. But my wonder is that Burrell would trust him."

"Just because he could not help himself," retorted Robin. "He wanted a clever lad who had understanding. His own valet was in France on some business or another, mighty mysterious; and a gentleman like him, who has a good character and a foul conscience, a good head and a bad heart, has need of a man of talent, not a loon, about his person. To do full justice, however, to his discretion, he treated me to as few of his secrets as he could, and I endeavoured to save him trouble by finding them all out."

The Buccaneer laughed aloud, but the high-souled Cavalier looked serious.

"Ah! ah!" said Dalton, "you never did relish machinations, and it is well you are not left to yourself in this plan of mine: honour is not the coin to take to a villain's market."

"'Tis the only coin I will ever deal in, Captain: and I told you before I left Cologne, that on no other condition would I accompany you to England, except that of being held clear of every act unbefitting a gentleman or a soldier."

"Young Sir," replied Dalton, "when you were indeed young, and long before you took your degree in morality at the rambling court of the second Charles, did I ever counsel you to do aught that your—that, in short, you might not do with perfect honour? I know too well what it is to sacrifice honour to interest, ever to wish you to make the trial. As for me, I am low enough in character——"

"My kind preserver! my brave friend!" interrupted Walter, touched at his change of manner. "Forgive such unworthy, such unmerited suspicion. This is not the first time I have had to learn your kindly care for me. But for you——"

"Well, there, there boy—I love to call you boy still; I can bear my own shame, but I could never bear yours."

Dalton paused, apparently with a view to change the subject:—the Cavalier observed:

"You quarrel with our young King's morality?"

"I'faith, I do!—though you will say it's ill coming from me to fault any man's conduct; but I hate your little vices as much as your little virtues: sickly, puny goods and evils, that are too weak for sun to ripen, too low for blast to break, but that endure, the same withered, sapless things, to the death-day—Augh! a bold villain, or a real downright good man, for my money. How the devil can Charles Stuart do any thing great, or think of any thing great, with his mistresses and his dogs? his gaming, and—Why, it is hardly a year since I took off from Dover that poor Lucy Barton and her brat, after the poor thing suffering imprisonment in the Tower for his sake!"

"The child's a noble child," said Walter; "but the mother's a sad reprobate, swears and drinks like a trooper."

"My mother is a woman," exclaimed little Robin, with great gravity, poising a mutton-bone between his fingers, to arrive at which, Crisp was making extraordinary efforts,— "and I can't deny that I've a sort of a love, though it be a love without hope, for a very pretty girl, a woman also:—

now this being the case, I'm not fond of hearing women reflected on; for, when they're young, they're the delight of our eyes; and, when they're old, they're useful, though a trifle crabbed, but still useful; and a house without a woman would be like—like—"

"Robin at fault!" said Dalton: "You've given me many a comparison, and now, I'll lend you one—a bell without a clapper—won't that do, Robin?"—Robin shook his head.

"Ay, Robin! Robin! you're right after all. If it were not for a woman, I'd never set foot on shore again: but I'm proud of my little Barbara; and all the fine things you tell me of her, Robin, make me still prouder;—her mother all over;—I often think how happy I shall be to call her daughter, when she won't be ashamed to own me: God help me!"—and be it noted that Dalton crossed himself as he spoke—"God help me! I often think that if ever I gain salvation, it will be through the prayers of that girl. Would that she had been brought up in her mother's way!"

"What would old Noll say to that papistical sign, master!" inquired Robin.

"D—n you and old Noll too! I never get a bit up towards heaven, that something doesn't pull me back again."

"I'll send you up in a moment," said Robin, in a kind voice. "Your daughter, Barbara—"

"Ay, that it is, that it is," muttered the Buccaneer; "my own, own child! the child of one, who, I bless God, never lived to know that she wedded (for I wedded her in holy Church, at Dominica) a wild and wicked rover. Our love was sudden and hot, as the sun under which we lived; and I never left her but once from the time we became one. I had arranged all, given up my ship and cargo,—and it was, indeed, a cargo of crimes—at least, I thought so then. It was before the civil wars; or I had again returned to England, or traded, no matter how. I flew to her dwelling, with a light heart and a light step—What there?—My wife, she who had hung so fondly round my neck, and explored me not to leave her, was stretched on a low bamboo bed—dead, Sir—dead! I might have known it before I entered, had I but remembered that she knew my step on the smooth walk, fell it ever so lightly, and would have met me—but for death! And there too sat a black she-devil, stuffing my infant's mouth with their vile food. I believe the hag thought I was mad, for I caught the child in my arms, held it to my heart while I bent over my wife's body, and kissed her cold, unreturning—for the first time unreturning, lips—then flung myself out of the accursed place, ran with my burden to the ship-owners, who had parted with me most

grudgingly, and was scudding before the wind in less than twelve hours, more at war with my own species than ever, and panting for something to wreak my hatred on. At first I wished the infant dead, for I saw her pining away; but at last, when she came to know me, and lift up her innocent hands to my face—I may confess it here—many and many a night have I sat in my cabin looking on that sleeping child, till my eyes swam in a more bitter brine than was ever brewed in the Atlantic. Particular circumstances obliged me to part with her, and I have never regretted her being with poor Lady Cecil—only I should have liked her to pray as her mother did. Not that I suppose it will make any difference at the wind-up,—if,” he added, doubtfully, “there be indeed any wind-up. Hugh Dalton will never be really himself till he can look that angel girl straight in the face, and ask her to pray for him, as her mother used.” Dalton was too much affected to continue, and both his auditors respected his feelings too much to speak. At length he said, “But this gloom will never do. Come, Robin, give us a song, and let it not be one of your sad ones.”

Robin sung,—

“Now, while the night-wind, loud and chill,  
Unheeded raves around the door,  
Let us the wine-cup drain and fill,  
And welcome social joys once more—  
The joys that still remain to cheer  
The gloomiest month of all the year,  
By our own fire-side.

“What need we care for frost and snow?  
Thus meeting—what have we to fear  
From frost and snow, or winds that blow?  
Such guests can find no entrance here.  
No coldness of the heart or air—  
Our little world of twelve feet square,  
And our own fire-side.

“I drink this pledge to thee and thine—  
I fill this cup to thine and thee—  
How long the summer sun might shine,  
Nor fill our souls with half the glee  
A merry winter’s night can bring,  
To warm our hearts, while thus we sing  
By our own fire-side.”

The song, however, produced a contrary effect to that the Ranger had intended. It pictured a fancied scene—one to

which both Walter and the Buccaneer had long been strangers; and a lengthened and painful pause succeeded to the brief moment of forced merriment. It was broken by the Cavalier, who inquired,

"How long will it be before you return from this new trip? for remember, my good friend, that suspense is a——"

"Hell!" interrupted Dalton, in his usual intemperate manner: "But I cannot help it. It is not wise to pluck unripe fruit—do you understand me?"

"Perfectly—and I dare say you are right; but tell me, Dalton, how is it that, till lately, you so completely abandoned this island, and kept to the Devon and Cornwall coasts? I should have thought this the most convenient; your store-house here is so well arranged."

"Ay, ay, sir; but this is over-near London, though it used to be a safe place enough; but now that Sir Michael Livesay—regicide that he is—abides so continually at Little Shurland, what chance is there for any good to such as I? I tell ye Cromwell's nose is ever on the scent."

"A great advantage to him, and a disadvantage to his foes," said Robin: "he has only to put the said nose to the touch-hole of the biggest cannon and off it goes; it never costs the army a farthing for matches when he's with it."

"Pshaw, Robin! but is he indeed so red-nosed? You have often seen him, Captain?"

"Ay, dressed in a plain cloth suit, made by an ill country tailor; his linen coarse and unclean; his band unfashionable, and often spotted with blood; his hat without a band; his sword close to his side; his countenance swollen and reddish; and, as to his nose, it looked to me more purple than aught else. But, sir, to see Cromwell, see him in battle—he is a right noble horseman; and the beast (a black one especially he was once so fond of,) seemed to have been tutored by the evil one: its eye was as vigilant as its rider's. Cromwell sits his saddle not gracefully, but firmly, just as if he were part and portion of the animal; then, with a sword in his right hand, and a pistol in his left—Sir, it was unlike any thing I ever saw! He must have managed the horse by the pressure of his heel, for I never could make out, such was the decision yet rapidity of his movements whether he held reins or not: now here, now there—firing—preachings—bouting—praying—conquering—yet everything done in its right place and time, never suffering the excitement of the moment to bear down one of his resolves. Had he been born a king——"

"He would never have been what he is," said the Cavalier; "for contention is the school of greatness."

"It's mighty fine to see you two sit there," exclaimed Robin, "praising up that man in the high place: pretty cavaliers indeed! Well, my opinion is, that—but indeed it is rude to give an opinion unasked, so I'll keep mine to myself. You were talking of the conveniences of this place; why, bless you, sir, it's nothing to fifty others along St. George's Channel. 'Twould do your heart good to see those our Captain has among the Cornish rocks; such comfortable dwellings, where you could stow away twenty people, never to chirrup to the sun again; such hiding-holes, with neat little trains of gunpowder, winding like snakes in summer, so that, to prevent discovery, one crack of a good flint would send the caverns and the cliffs high into the air, to tell stories to the stars of the power of man's skill to destroy the most sublime as well as the most beautiful works of nature."

"Robin, you ought to have been a preacher!"

"No," said Robin mournfully, and shaking his head, as was his custom, "for I know nothing of your book-holiness; only I can't bear any thing moulded and made by the hand of God to be ruined by that of man."

"What ails ye, lad?" inquired the Buccaneer; "I thought ye had got over all your shadows, as ye used to call them."

"Not all of them; only they do not come upon me as often as they used," he replied gravely; for poor Robin had at one time been subject to periodical fits that bordered on insanity, and during such afflictions wandered about the country, without seeking repose or speaking word to any one. Constance Cecil, with her usual kindness, had him frequently taken care of at Cecil Place: and Barbara's kind attention to him during such fearful trials, was the source of as strong, as unvarying, and devoted an attachment as ever human being manifested towards another.

By degrees the conversation sunk into low, confidential whispers, as if caution, even there, was necessary. It was near four o'clock in the morning before the Buccaneer departed for his ship, and then Robin escorted the Cavalier to his usual chamber in the Gull's Nest.

## CHAPTER VIII.

When thirsty grief in wine we steep,  
When healths and draughts go free,  
Fishes that tipple in the deep  
Know no such liberty.

LOVELACE.

"A BLESSING and a salutation, reverend sir; and may the sun, moon, and stars be sanctified unto you!"

"Ah! Solomon Grundy, would that the Lord had given thee sense to understand, as he hath bestowed upon thee talent to speak according to thy understanding! As it is, Solomon, I lament that thou art a fool, Solomon, a very fool, except in what regardeth the creature comforts; and, of a verity, thou art worthy to send up a dinner, even unto Hugh Peters, after he hath delivered a soul-converting oration before the chosen from among God's people."

"Which reflection he would in no wise condemn," observed the cook of Cecil Place, whose closely-cropped head of foxy hair seemed to throw a proportionate quantity of glowing colour upon his rubicund countenance. He had all the outward marks that indicate a *bon vivant*, and words of piety came as awkwardly from his lips as sighs from the mouth of a seal or a salmon. His little gray eyes twinkled with affection for the said "creature-comforts;" and the leathern pouch he now carried over his shoulder was stocked with sundry good things appropriated from the larder for his own especial diet. He had received permission from Mistress Cecil to accompany some of his neighbours to see the grand company from London visit a first rate man-of-war that had just arrived off Sheerness, bringing in a train of prizes which the veteran Blake had taken and sent home, himself proceeding to Vera Cruz, and which it was rumoured the Lord Oliver was about to inspect in person. This intelligence set the country in a ferment, and persons of all classes hastened to the island to witness the sight.—For the English *were*, as they now *are*, a sight-loving people, who find pleasure in pageants; and then, as at present, they demanded economy; but when economy came, they designated it meanness.

The staunch Roundheads exulted at the idea of Cromwell's exhibiting himself thus openly after the upsetting of the Syndercomb plot; and the Royalists, depressed and disappointed, were content to let matters take their course, at least until they saw some prospect of a change; while the Levellers, the party most dreaded by the Protector, and which had been most fatal to the Stuarts, remained in that dangerous state of repose that is but the preparative for renewed exertions.

The Reverend Jonas Fleetword had set forth from the sole desire of "beholding him who was anointed with the oil of the Spirit, and whose name among the nations was Wonderful." Solomon Grundy, and such other of the servants of Cecil Place as could be spared, were impelled forward by the wish of hearing or of seeing something new; intelligence not travelling upon wings of steam in the seventeenth century, and newspapers being but rare visitors at Shepey. Occasionally, indeed, there did descend from the breakfast-room of Sir Robert, unto the servants' hall, a stray number or two of the "*Mercurius Politicus*," the "*Perfect Diurnal*," or "the *Parliament Scout*;" the contents of which were eagerly devoured by the several auditors, while one, more gifted than his fellows, drawled forth, amid ejaculations and thanks unto the Lord, the doings of the Commonwealth, and especially of him who was a master in the new Israel. But the information of the underlings of the house was generally gathered from the pious pedlars who sought entrance at the gate, well stocked with wares of every possible description, and with "gifts" of which they were always abundantly lavish to those who hungered or were athirst.

The ladies of the family remained at home; the Lady Frances feeling assured that her father would not be present, as she had received no intimation to such effect from Whitehall. Constance, however, had heard too many tales of Oliver's sudden movements to feel satisfied as to the certainty of any matter in which he was concerned. It was no secret either that he had been displeased with his daughter for her obstinate attachment to Mr. Rich; and that he desired her, for the present, to remain in retirement, and away from Court.

We have said that Solomon Grundy had received permission to view the sight; and for a time he proceeded on his way, accompanied by the other domestics; but, under some sly pretext, he lingered behind them. The worthy preacher had not left Cecil Place so early, but, notwithstanding the ambling pace of his favourite jennet, he soon



came up to Solomon, who, seated under a spreading elm by the wayside, was rapidly demolishing the contents of his wallet, freshened by frequent draughts from a black bottle of vast rotundity.

"Master Solomon Grundy," he observed, reining up his steed, "could not your stomach tarry, even for a short while? Ah! worthy cook, you have a most professional longing after the flesh-pots."

Solomon grinned, and applied himself with renewed diligence to his viands when the preacher had passed. He was now surrounded by a motley party, who had crossed from the main land, all bearing towards the same point.—Puritans, whose cloaks were of the most formal cut, and whose hats emulated the steeple of St. Paul's; Levellers, with firm steps, wrinkled and overhanging brows, and hard unchanging features, all denoting inflexibility of purpose and decision of character; Cavaliers, whose jaunty gait was sobered, and whose fashionable attire was curtailed in consideration that such bravery would be noticed and reproved by the powers that were; Women attired in dark hoods and sad-coloured kirtles; some of demure aspect, others with laughing eyes and dimpled cheeks, who exchanged glances, and sometimes words, with youths of serious apparel but joyous countenances; while here and there might be recognised Divines, whose iron physiognomies disdained to be affected by any of the usual feelings that flesh is heir to: and ladies on horseback, or in the lumbering heavy carriages, progressing from the horse ferry, "with stealthy pace and slow," towards the centre of attraction.

The English even now make a business of enjoyment: but in those days, what we designate pleasure was known by no such unholy term: it was called "recreation," "the refreshment of the creature," "the repose of the flesh," by any name in fact, except the true one. But, in the particular instance to which we refer, it was considered a sacred duty to uphold and applaud the Lord Protector whenever there occurred an opportunity for so doing; and sound-hearted Puritans would make a pilgrimage for the purpose with as much zeal as ever Roman Catholics evinced in visiting the shrine of some holy saint. The ships rode proudly in the harbour, and groups of the gentry were occasionally conveyed on board by boats, that waited for the purpose both at Queenborough and Sheerness. It was an animated scene, but the soul of all was wanting, for neither Cromwell, nor any portion of the court, made their appearance. When it was noon, the people hoped he would arrive ere evening; but as the evening advanced, and he failed to en-

ter upon the scene, there was a general token of disappointment throughout the crowd, although some few rejoiced at the occurrence, holding it a sign of fear on his part, as if he dreaded to be seen among them.

A party, consisting of ten or twelve persons, at Queensborough, had gathered round the trunk of a withered and hollow oak, growing in front of a public-house, that displayed the head of the Lord Protector—a political lure, that was certain to attract all Commonwealth people to the receipt of custom. The noble tree had been one of magnificent growth, but age or accident had severed the trunk, and within its heart decay had long been revelling. It was now perfectly hollow, and afforded a free passage; two enormous props had been found necessary, to prevent its making a last resting-place of the earth it had for ages triumphantly protected. The cavity that time had created was sufficiently extensive to afford shelter during a storm to three or four persons; and it was not unfrequently resorted to by the people of the inn, as a storehouse for fuel, or farming utensils, when a plentiful harvest rewarded the toil of the husbandman. Its branches, which had so often sheltered the wayfarer alike from the tempest and the hot summer's sun, had been hewn away, to serve the purposes of strife in the shape of spear-handles, or to the doom of the winter fire; one solitary arm of the blighted tree alone remained, extending its scraggy and shattered remnants to a considerable distance over the greensward which had been, from time immemorial, trodden by the merry morrice-dancers, and broken by the curvetting of the hobby-horse and the Dragon of Wantley, sports it was now deemed sinful but to name. From a fragment of this dilapidated branch, hung the sign of mine host of the Oliver's Head; and right glad would he have been, if rumour had lied with each returning morn, so that the lie could but fill his dwelling with so many profitable guests. Thrice had the party, by whom had been appropriated the seat beneath the oak, emptied the black jack of its double-dub ale; and the call for a fourth replenishing was speedily answered, as the sun was setting over the ocean, and tinging the sails and masts of the distant vessels with hues that might have shamed the ruby and the sapphire.

"To have our day go for nothing, after a trudge of some twenty miles, to this out-of-the-way place,—Adad, sirs, it's no joke! exclaimed a sturdy, bluff-looking man, to our friend little Robin Hays, who sat upon the corner of the bench, one leg tucked under (doubtless for the purpose of enabling him to sit higher than nature had intended,) while the other

swung methodically backward and forward: "Adad, sir, it's no joke!" he repeated.

"No more it isn't, Master Grimstone; I never heard you joke yet," said Robin.

"And I aver it is an open and avowed doubting of God's providence," chimed in the cook.

"What! what!" exclaimed six or eight voices: "what do you mean by such blasphemy, Solomon Grundy? A forfeit and a fine!"

"Peace, silly brawlers!" returned he of the kitchen, who had discussed the good things thereof, until he had no room for more, and who had also quaffed largely of the forbidden beverage called "strong waters;"—"I say, peace, silly brawlers! I repeat it is an open and avowed doubting of Providence, that we should come thus far, and see nothing but a parcel of people—parcel of sky—parcel of water—parcel of ships—parcel—"

"Of fools!" grinned little Robin, pointing at the same time towards the oratorical cook, who so little relished the compliment, as to elevate the polished remnant of a mutton shoulder-blade, and aim a well-directed blow at the manikin, which he avoided only by springing with great agility through the aperture in the trees, so as to alight at some distance on the other side of the hollow trunk. This harlequinade excited much boisterous laughter among the crowd; and no one joined in it more mirthfully than young Springall, who, for some reason known best to Hugh Dalton, yet sanctioned by Sir Robert Cecil, had spent the last few days in the kitchens and buttery of Cecil Place. There was another youth of the same party, who perchance enjoyed the merriment, but who looked as if he could have still more enjoyed melancholy. He was seated next to Springall, on the rude bench; and the boy-sailor treated him with such marks of attention, as manifested that he regarded him more in the light of superior, than as an equal. The stranger, however, remained with his hat so much slouched over his face, that his features were in complete shadow, while his cloak was muffled over the lower part of his countenance.

"I say, Robin," exclaimed Springall, "come out of your shell; you have remained there long enough to tell over a dozen creeds or paters, were they in fashion—Come out, are you bewitched? Robin the Ranger, I say, come forth, and give us a taste of your calling—a melody—a melody! But you should hear our Jeromio sing his lingo songs some night astern; and though I do hate that cunning rascal, yet, my eyes! how he docs sing!"

"Singing," observed Solomon Grundy, whose potations had wonderfully increased his piety, "singing is an invention of the beast's, yea, of the horned beast's, of him who knoweth not a turtle from a turtle-dove, but would incontinently stew them in the same cauldron, over brimstone and pitch; therefore shall my voice bubble and boil over against such iniquities—yea, and my tongue shall be uplifted against them, even in the land of Ham!"

"Go to sleep Solomon, and you, youngster, give us a song yourself," growled Grimstone, who had all the outward bearing of a savage; "the evening is nigh closing, and the birds are gone to their nests. Nevertheless, the song must be right proper: so tune up, tune up, my boy!"

Springall, with due modesty, replied, "I could sing you sea songs, and land songs, but these I leave to Robin Hays, who beats me hollow. The clerk of our ship has translated one of Jeromio's liltis, so I'll tip you a bit of sentiment.

"O'er the clear quiet waters  
My gondola glides,  
And gently it wakens  
The slumbering tides.  
All nature is smiling,  
Beneath and above;  
While earth and while heaven  
Are breathing of love!

"In vain are they breathing  
Earth, heaven—to me,  
Though their beauty and calmness  
Are whispers of thee:  
For the bright sky must darken,  
The earth must be gray,  
Ere the deep glooms that saddens  
My soul, pass away.

"But see, the last day-beam  
Grows pale, ere it die;  
And the dark clouds are passing  
All over the sky.  
I hear thy light footstep,  
Thy fair form I see;  
Ah! the twilight has told thee  
Who watches for thee."

Towards the latter part of the ditty, which was but little relished by the company, it was evident that Solomon had followed Grimstone's advice, for his snoring formed a loud

and most inharmonious bass to the sweet boy-like melody of Springall's ballad.

Robin had rejoined the party, but his face and lips were of a livid paleness, and he seemed labouring under evident distress.

"Art hurt, Robin?" inquired the stranger, who is known to us by the name of Walter, now speaking for the first time. Robin shook his matted head in reply.

"Something ails thee, man; something must ail thee—speak, good Robin."

"I'm neither sick, sad, nor sorry," he answered, affecting his usually easy manner; "so here's a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether at the black jack, to the health—But pardon, I had forgotten the wickedness of such profane customs." Yet Robin evidently did not hold it profane to "swill the brown bowl" so eagerly that but the lees remained at the bottom, as he laid it down, refreshed and strengthened.

"So you won't give us a toast, Master Robin," said Springall; "well, I'll not only give ye a toast, but I'll stand the price of a fresh jack of double-dub for you all to drink it in; and I'll fight any man that says it nay, besides."

"Hold your profaneness!" exclaimed Robin, with a solemnity so opposed to his actual character as to be absolutely ludicrous: "Springall, thou hast had too much already; let us depart in peace."

"D—n me if I do—peace me no peace."

"I tell you what," interrupted Robin, with resolute spitefulness, "if you swear again, I'll lodge information against you."

"Ah! ah! ah!" shouted several of the party, "Robin Hays turned preacher! Old Noll has sent the breath of holiness before him to supply his place, and made a sudden convert of the Ranger!"

"I entreat you most meekly to be silent; if not for my sake, for your own. My brethren, you know not—"

"That here comes the black jack," interrupted Springall; "and here's to the health—But Cavaliers—"

"We are *not* Cavaliers," interrupted Robin, in his turn; "as I hope for mercy, we are not Cavaliers:—hard—honest—pains-taking Commonwealth citizens are we; but not, I say not," and he elevated his voice to its highest pitch, "not Cavaliers."

"The devil's in the cards, and knaves are trumps," exclaimed Springall, "nevertheless I'll have my toast, and here it is.—Come, up standing,—The fairest maid in Shepey, Barbara Iverk! and may she soon be a wife—"



"To whom?" inquired Robin, bitterly.

"To whoever can win and wear her," replied Springall. "Come, come, Master Bob, you're mazed by some devilry or other; the wind's in your teeth; you've been sailing against a norwester, or have met with a witch on a broomstick the other side of this old oak; Serves an oak right to wither up—why wasn't it made into a ship! But here's to Barbara Iverk, the fair maid of Shepey!"

"The fair maid of Shepey!" repeated Grimstone, after drinking the toast. "That title ought to be given to the mistress, not the maid; and I care not if I wind up the evening with a cup of Canary to the health of Lady Constance—"

"Peace, sir!" exclaimed the stranger, who had heretofore taken no note of their rioting: "I shall offer chastisement to any man who profanes that Lady's name at a vulgar revel."

"Adad! and adad, young sir, ye're a game one! What's in any woman, that a man can't name her? Flesh is flesh! and as to distinctions—we are all members of a Commonwealth! so I say a stoup of Canary to the Lady—"

"By holy Paul! if that Lady's name passes your unworthy lips, my good rapier shall pass straight through your unhallowed carcass! exclaimed the Cavalier fiercely, at the same time throwing back his cloak, and drawing his sword more than half out of its scabbard.

"Hey ho! two can play at that: I never eat my words; so, the sword in one hand, and the Canary in the other—to the health of—"

His mouth was stopped by the application of the palm of Robin's broad hand to his unclosed lips; while he whispered some words into his ear, that had the magical effect of restoring the weapon to its sheath, and of inducing the braggart to resume the seat he had so hastily abandoned, grumbling, in an under tone, words that fell indistinctly upon the ear of his opposer.

"Let us home; it is a long and a dreary road to Cecil Place, and the night is upon us already! so up, good Solomon. Here, landlord! this fatted calf is unable to move: give him house-room till to-morrow; and mind you put him on his way in time for the dinner-hour," was Robin's parting speech. He then exchanged rough, but kindly salutations, with his boon companions; and soon the trio—Walter, Springall, and Robin, had taken a by-path, leading to the part of the island in which Cecil Place was situated.

## CHAPTER IX.

His rude assault, and rugged handling  
Strange seemed to the knight, that eye with foe  
In faire defence, and goodly menaging  
Of arms, was wont to fight.

THE FAIRIE QUEENE.

THE three young men pursued their way; at first laughing and chatting merrily upon the events of the morning; but gradually becoming more and more silent, as persons usually do when the first flush of revelling is over. The taller of the three, who has of course been recognised as the mysterious visitor at Lady Cecil's funeral and in the cave of the Buccaneer, although he bore himself towards them with all the courtesy of a true-born gentleman, received the deference of his more humble associates only as his due, and in a manner that showed he had been accustomed to more than merely respectful treatment. After traversing much low and marshy ground, they suddenly reached a spot where the road divided, the one path leading to Cecil Place, the other to Gull's Nest crag.

"Come with me, Robin; unless, indeed, the master wishes your company. I ask his pardon for not thinking of that afore," said Springall.

"Not I, good Springall," replied the gentleman. "I think you need a guide, for you walk the quarter-deck better than the dry land; and, if I mistake not, there are sundry pitfalls in the way to your present home. I know my path; and, besides, am a regular land-lubber."

"Save and bless your honour!" exclaimed the young sailor, holding all land-lubbers in thorough contempt: "that ye're not: land-lubber, indeed! I'll be at the Nest to-morrow early—if——"

"Hush!" said the more careful Robin, "never speak words of secret, openly—See ye yonder?"

"Yes," replied Springall, "two horsemen on the other road; too far off to hear my words, unless they had the ears of a hare."

"I had better go with you, sir," observed Robin, earnestly: "I will go with you, that's the truth of it. Good night, Spring—steer to the left till you come to the red gap; after that, along the stone fence, on the right; it will lead you to the orchard, then you know your way."

"Why did you not go with him?" inquired the Cavalier, kindly; "it is a dark night, poor boy, he has small skill in land-steering."

"He must learn, sir, as I do," answered Robin; "and my duty calls me to attend on you, particularly when strange people are a-stir."

"You are to be my champion, Robin?"

"Your servant, sir. A servant who learned his duty before it was the fashion for servants to forget what they owe their masters. Alack! alack! service now, like liberty, is but a name, and servants do as they please."

"Did you so with the master of Burrell?"

"But indifferently, sir; I fled, in a very servant-like manner, as you know, when he was in danger. But I had my reasons for it, as well as for going with him to London; only I'd rather not talk of that to-night, sir. It is a mortal pity that such a sweet lady as Mistress Constance should be forced to marry such a brute: for my part, I never could discover any wisdom in those contracts, as they call them. Ah, little Barbara is a discreet girl. But I have heard some one say, that, for all her fine lands, poor lady, her heart is breaking, and chipping away bit by bit. 'Tis very fine to be rich, but, being rich, very hard to be happy, because the troubles we make ourselves are less easy to be borne, than those that come upon us in the course of nature. If I had my wish, it is not gold I'd ask for."

"Indeed! What then, Robin?"

"Just enough of beauty to win one woman's heart: I think I have wit enough to keep it."

"Pshaw, Robin! though you may not be very comely, there are many worse."

"Ay, sir, apes and baboons; but they are like their kind—while I am a poor withered creature, that nature, in spite, threw from her coarse and unfinished."

"I wonder a person of your sense, Robin, should fret at such trifles. Remember, beauty is as summer fruits, easy to corrupt, and quick to perish."

"But for all that we look for them in summer, sir, just as youth seeks out beauty."

The stranger turned towards Robin, but made no reply; it is sometimes given to the simple to disconcert the wise, and that alone by their simplicity.

A long silence followed; each ruminating on his own prospects and projects: it was at length broken by Walter, who abruptly asked if Robin was sure he had taken the right path.

"Mercy, sir, am I sure of the sight of my eyes! Behind



that tree runs the road we must cross, and then on to Stony Gap! Ah, many's the signal I've hung out for the Fire-fly from that same spot; but, if perilous times are past, and we live in days—as Master Fleetword hath it—of peace, poor Hugh's trade will be soon over. I wish he were back—the coast looks lonesome without him.”

“So it does, Robin: but canst tell me what it was that made you look so dull, and astonishingly religious after the hop, step, and jump you took through the hollow oak?”

“Ah, master!”

“Well, Robin—”

“Why, you see, when I sprang through, ‘thinking nothing at all,’ as the song says, I found myself on the opposite side of the tree, close—as close as I am to you, or nearly so—to——” As Robin had proceeded thus far with his recital, a sudden turn brought them to the high road, which led into a kind of hollow, flanked on either side by close brushwood. About a hundred yards from where they stood, three men were engaged in violent feud. The scene, at such a moment, and in such a place, seemed produced by the wave of a magician's wand. The Cavalier rubbed his eyes, as if to be assured of its reality; while Robin stood aghast, bewildered, and uncertain how to act:—the moon was shining in all its brightness, so that they could see as clearly as at noon-day.

“By heaven, 'tis two to one!” exclaimed the youth, casting off his cloak, and unsheathing his rapier with the rapidity of lightning.

“So it is!” gasped Robin; “but two to such a one!—Save us, sir! you're not going to draw sword for him—?” But ere the sentence was concluded, his companion was in the thick of the fray. “Oh!” exclaimed Robin, as in agony, “that I should live to see true blood stirred in such a cause!—How he lays about him! Poor boy, he little knows who's who! What a noble thrust! hand to hand—how their swords glitter!—A murrain on my shrivelled carcass! they would but laugh to see me among them! O that I could be even with nature, and hate her as she has hated me!—Yet, to be thus without a weapon!—Ah! one murderer's down, and the arch-fiend with him—now are they entwined as with the coil of deadly serpents. Treacherous dog! the other would take advantage; but, ah! well done, gallant young gentleman!—he holds him back with most wonderful strength—and now—see, see—the combatants are separated—one stands over the other.—Oh, how he stabs!—Hold! hold!—Now, could the moon show through those deadly wounds, I could count twenty, at the least: and only

one such would let the life from out Goliath, or the strongest man in Gath.—But see, the other shows a fleet foot; and that silly boy flies after him! Alack! that he will not learn discretion! There they go, across the fields, and not towards the ferry."

When Robin arrived at this point in his comments, the man whose life had most probably been saved by the young Cavalier's interposition, called to him to come forward,—a summons the manikin obeyed at first but slowly: a second call, however, urged his alacrity; and he stood before one, of whom he was evidently in much dread, with a bent head and a tremulous frame.

"Canst tell aught of that vile clay, whom the Lord hath delivered into my hand?" he said, pointing to the lifeless corpse, while his chest still heaved from the violence of the exertion he had undergone, although, in other respects, he appeared as composed as if he had gone forth only to enjoy the sweet breath of evening, and a ruder breeze than he anticipated had passed across his brow. Robin stooped to examine the distorted features of the dead, smeared as they were by the warm blood that issued from more than one mortal wound.

"He was one of thy party but three hours past," continued the stranger, speaking with energy and rapidity, "and thou knowest him; heard I not his words beneath the oak? Ay, and if it had been left unto thee, verily I might have been given over to the destroyer, even as Hoshea was given unto Shalmaneser. Speak, thou deformity, lest, finding thy mind as base as its casket, I let it forth from its vile dwelling, even as a thing of naught."

"Tis poor Grimstone," exclaimed Robin, rising from his scrutiny, and evidently affected by the loss of his boon companion on more occasions than one; "he was ever after some devilry—but his attack upon such as you——"

"Silence, sir. Did I not before intimate my wishes?"

"Well, then," muttered Robin, "his attack must have been purely a matter of plunder. Grim was never ambitious—never looked beyond a purse of broad pièces;" adding, in a lower tone, "he was always a fool."

"The carrion hath fallen in a pleasant place—so let the next comer look to it, and do thou fetch hither my horse. Had it not been that my saddle-girth gave way, I could have mastered twenty such footpads."

This was said in the tone of one who, however grateful for assistance, would have been much better pleased to have found it needless, and to have worked out the victory by his own hands.

Robin hurried to secure the animal, a well-trained war-horse, which had stood quietly in the centre of the road, calmly awaiting the issue of the combat: he observed that the saddle was turned completely round, and hung under the belly. The horseman adjusted his cloak, wiped his sword with the square cape, and had just replaced it in the scabbard, when the Cavalier returned from his fruitless chase. As he advanced towards the person to whom he had rendered such signal service, he noted that he was a hale, stout man, probably past the meridian of life, of a stern and awe-striking presence; and an involuntary feeling of respect made him lift his hat from his head, and even remain uncovered while expressing hopes "that he had received no injury from the cowards who had thus beset his path." The other gave no reply to the inquiry, but fixed a shrewd and penetrating gaze upon the young man's countenance. Apparently the scrutiny pleased him, for he extended his hand, and seizing that of his preserver, held it firmly within his palm for about the space of a minute, then pressed it within his mailed grasp so strenuously, that the youth felt the blood tingle to his finger-ends.

"I owe thanks and gratitude, and would fain know to whom: your name, young sir?"

The Cavalier paused for a moment, and then said—

"You may call me De Guerre—Walter De Guerre."

"Walter de Guerre!—an English Christian wedded to a French surname!—'tis strange, but let it pass, let it pass: you have been the instrument in the gracious preserving of one who, though unworthy, is of some account; and instruments in the Lord's hand must be regarded. My companions had business in this neighbourhood, and had left me but a little time, when I was set upon by these cowards; but God is merciful, and inspired you with valour. And now, sir, whither wend ye? To Cecil Place?"

"No, sir," replied De Guerre, pondering what he should answer, or how he should designate his present abode.

"To the worshipful Sheriff, Sir Michael Livesay, at Little Shute? He must look to his ferry-warden and boatmen to prevent such villanies as have now occurred."

"To none of these, sir," replied Walter; "in fact, I am an humble traveller, lodging at an humble hostelry not far from hence."

During this dialogue, Robin had adjusted the saddle-girth, and led the horse to its master, who took the bridle from his hand, and held it, examining the girth as he spoke. Robin glided imperceptibly round to De Guerre's side, and standing behind him, pulled his sleeve, and whispered—

"Don't tell him where."

The intimation was, perhaps, not heard, certainly not heeded, for the young man added—

"At the widow Hays'."

"I bethink me; the house near East Church. It is called Nest—Nest—Nest—ay, Gull's Nest. 'Tis but a poor abode for one who bears a diamond-hilted sword, and bears it bravely too. An every-day person, Master De Guerre, would sell the diamonds and get a gayer lodging."

"Persons differ in this and all other matters, more or less," replied the young man somewhat haughtily: "I wish you good night, sir."

"Hot!" said the stranger, at the same time laying his hand upon the arm of De Guerre: "Hot and high! Well, it is an ill tree that needs no pruning; but the preserver and the preserved must not part thus. Come with me to Cecil Place, and though I have it not to offer golden recompense, yet I can assure to you a glad welcome; for my friends all love each other."

"Go with him, go with him; never say him nay: why should you not go when he desires it?" whispered Robin.

"But you are mounted, and well too, and I a-foot, and cannot pace it with you," replied De Guerre, hesitatingly.

"And your gray steed is too far away—even for that nimble squire to bring in good time," retorted the other, a kind smile distending the rugged and untrimmed moustache that garnished his upper lip.

"My gray steed!" repeated Walter in astonishment.

"Yes, and a stout beast it is. But I will rein in my horse, and the place is not so distant but we may keep together."

"Thanks for your proffered hospitality," said De Guerre; "but must we not do something with the fellow you have slain? His companion was too swift o'foot for me."

"Let the tree lie even where it fell," replied the other, looking on the body for an instant, and then mounting his horse with the greatest composure; "some one will cover it with decent earth in the morning: let us forward, my young friend."

De Guerre signified his consent, and walked, closely followed by Robin, at the stranger's side.

"And so," observed the horseman, turning to the Ranger, "you're accompanying us, uninvited, on our way. Wert thou ever engaged in any of the mummeries of Satan, dominated stage plays? Of all the tricks learned at courts, that of *tumbling* is the most dangerous; and as thy master, Sir Willmott Burrell, has not practised it yet, I am at loss to understand how thou couldst be so perfect."

"I have served many masters, sir, and am now out of employ," replied Robin, whose ready wit appeared to have deserted him, and who kept as near as possible to De Guerre.

"Thou sayest truly; and lest one of them may have a demand upon thee ere morning, what say ye to wending onward to that unholy resort of cavaliers and smugglers, called the Gull's Nest, and leaving us to pursue our course unattended to Sir Robert Cecil?"

Robin bowed as respectfully as he could, and was about to whisper some words to De Guerre, when the stranger added, in a stern voice—

"On, on! no whispering."

Robin held up his hands, as if he would have said, "How can I help it?" and sprang over the adjoining fence with his usual agility.

They proceeded some little time without speaking, De Guerre discontented with himself at the power his extraordinary companion so strangely possessed over him, yet yielding to an influence against which he felt it impossible to contend.

"And, pray, sir," at length inquired the elder, "what news may now be stirring in France? You have, I presume, but recently arrived from thence?"

"I have been in France, but not lately."

"In the Netherlands, then? for I take it you are given to the carnal follies of the times, and have been cherished in the heresies, religious and political, propagated by a person or persons assuming a particular rank, which the Almighty saw fitting to wrest from them now many days past."

"I have not, as I think, been brought up in any heresy," replied the youth, gently but firmly, "and I should be sorry so brave a gentleman and so expert a wordsman thought so; though I do not feel myself bound to give you any information touching my private opinions, which I hold to be as distinctly my own property as my hat or sword——"

"And which," said the stranger, "is, perhaps, the only property you are possessed of."

"Exactly so, sir; but persons of a lower estate than mine have lately risen to high places,—ay, and carry themselves as loftily as if they were born to lord it over not only empire, but empires.

"Ah! true: then, I suppose, you would fain seek service; and if so, I think my poor word would be of use. I am somewhat esteemed by the Protector and other princes of this

great Commonwealth, and would gladly tender my aid to you, to whom I am already strongly bound."

"I thank you for your bounty, sir; but at present I feel inclined to sheathe, not draw my sword."

"But why? A youth like you, gifted with courage, skill, and health,—the state demands some activity at your hands; 'tis ill to be a laggard."

"Nor am I one. Frankly, I like not innovation, and this state has been experimentalising lately:—in a word, I like it not."

"That is a candid confession, more candid than your former words would have led me to expect. But, young gentleman, it is not safe to trust such sentiments into a stranger's keeping: the Lord Protector has, it is said, his spies in every house; nay, it is reported the highways grow them as rife as blackberries."

"And you may be one, for aught I know or care," said the youth, bluntly. "But what of that?—they say Old Noll likes in others what he hath not yet practised himself—a thing called honesty; and at worst, he could but take my life, which, after all, is little worth in comparison to those he has already taken."

A long silence followed this intemperate speech, which at last was broken by the mounted traveller.

"You spoke of innovations, and I also believe it is ill to try experiments in states, unless the need be urgent, and unless it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the love of change that urgeth the reformation. Is not Time the greatest innovator?—is he not always changing? It hath been said that, as in nature things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place; so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. Steel sharpens steel; so one glory perfecteth another: and I am of belief, that they who are glorious, must have been factious. Yet are there degrees in honour, and amongst the first of them I should rank founders of commonwealths, or even states, such as we read of in history—Romulus—"

"And you would, I suppose, include the name of Cromwell in the list you were about to make," interrupted De Guerre.

"And why not?" retorted the other proudly; why not Cromwell? Is the oak to be despised because it was once an acorn? Remember what he suffers for his state; if, like the stars above us, he is much venerated, even like them he hath no rest."

"Nor doth he deserve it," said the youth.

"Ah! say'st so!" exclaimed the stranger, hastily, but instantly adding in a settled voice—"Walter De Guerre, or whatever be your name, beware, and use not such expressions when you know not your company. You said but now, your opinions were your property; then give them not away unasked where we are going. I know you to be brave, and generosity follows bravery as truly as one star succeedeth another; but discretion of speech is more valuable than eloquence. And, as to Cromwell, the people's shepherd has need to keep good count and careful watch; for wolves and foxes in sheep's clothing break into the pin-folds, kill and devour. Did he not act the part of Epimetheus (according to the profane but wise fable,) who, when griefs and evils flew abroad, at last shut down the lid, and kept Hope in the bottom of the vessel, verily, indeed, his lot would be severe. We can know but little how hard it is to labour through evil report and good report. Charity in judgment is befitting in all, but most of all in the young."

They were now within sight of Cecil Place. De Guerre had to contend with many painful feelings, and a provoking consciousness of the strange ascendancy his companion had acquired over him, so that he dared hardly speak his own words or think his own thoughts. Nor could he trace this to any external influence: the man was plain almost to vulgarity; his dress common; and though his sword-blade was strong, the handle was perfectly devoid of ornament. His horse was the only thing in his appointments that indicated the station of a gentleman; but the saddle appeared so old and battered, and withal so ill-made, that De Guerre marvelled so noble an animal would condescend to carry such a weight of old leather and damaged flock. It is true, that towards the close of their conversation he had uttered some sentiments that for a moment startled the Cavalier; but then he had uttered them in so unskilled and confused a manner, and with such an unmusical voice, that it reminded him, not unaptly, of a blacksmith stringing pearls, so coarse was the medium through which these fine things came. He ventured to console himself, however, by the reflection, that a man of such cool and determined bravery must be, despite external appearances, a person of some consequence: an opinion confirmed by his being a guest, and evidently a privileged guest, of Sir Robert Cecil. He arrived at this conclusion as they passed the postern-gate; and, as the night was now far gone, the old porter lighted his flambeau to escort them to the house.

As the old man walked some degree in advance, the elder took the opportunity to inquire of his companion—

"Have you ever seen Mistress Cecil?"

"Seen Mistress Cecil!" repeated De Guerre, in evident embarrassment: "I have seen but few of the ladies of the country—have had few opportunities of doing so."

"Yet you resented the profanation of her name this afternoon under the oak—dost remember that?"

"I know not who you are, sir," retorted Walter, angrily, and at length fully roused from the respectful silence he had so long maintained, "that you should thus cross and question one who sought not your acquaintance. What right have you or any man to watch and pry from every nook and corner, night and day, so that, methinks, you neither take nor give rest? By heavens, if I were a friend (which, thank God, I am not) of him you call Protector, or King, or whatever it be, I would advise him of such persons; for it is the duty of every honest subject to watch over his ruler, as over his father, with the care and the duty—the tenderness and affection of a child. I should like to know how you knew I had a gray steed?"

"Or how I discovered your ruffle with Sir Willmott Burrell after the funeral," interrupted the other; "but be not afraid of meeting him: he left Cecil Place some days ago, to arrange some business. Nay, now, do not crow loudly your defiance, because I mentioned the word *fear*. What a game-cock it is! pity, that though there is no white feather, there should be no right feather in so gallant a crest!—Methinks the old porter is long in summoning the grooms, so I will enter in the name of the Lord; and do thou mind 'Old Thunder,' " he added, in a gentle tone, at the same time patting the curved neck of the noble creature, who turned round his head at the caress, as if in appreciation of its value.

De Guerre took the bridle almost mechanically in his hand, and at the same time muttered, "Left here, like a groom, to hold his horse, indeed! I'll groom it for no man—Yet 'tis no disgrace, even to knighthood, to handle a good steed; though I'd bet my poor Jubilee against him.—Ah! here they come—" and he was preparing to resign his charge right gladly to two servants, who advanced from a side-door just as the stranger had mounted the last of a series of broad and platform-like steps leading to the principal entrance. No sooner, however, had the first of the attendants caught sight of the horseman's cloak and broad-brimmed hat of the stranger, than he sprang up the steps, and seized the garment, as the wearer was entering the hall. He turned fiercely around at the assault; but the aggressor, whom De Guerre now recognised as Springall, hung upon him too



firmly to be easily shaken off:—he drew his sword half out of its scabbard, and kept his eye fixed upon the youth.

"I was sure of it! I was sure of it!" shouted Springall; "the cloak! the hat! all! Now will I be even with thee for hanging me over the cliff—like a poor fish in a heron's claw—and all for nothing."

"Go to, Springall," said De Guerre, coming up, pleased at observing that the wrathful glance of the stranger had changed into a smiling good-humoured look at the boy's harmless impetuosity: "Go to, Springall; the double-dub and the Canary are in thine eyes, and in thy scatter-pate. What could you know of this strange gentleman?"

"I vow by the compass," replied the boy, suffering his grasp on the cloak to relax, as he gazed in no less amazement on the Cavalier; "we are bewitched! all bewitched! I left you, sir, on your way to Gull's Nest with wee Robin; and here you are keeping company with this very hey-ho sort of—But by the Law Harry! he's off again!" exclaimed Springall, whose astonishment had got the better of his watchfulness, and who perceived, on turning round, that the mysterious gentleman had disappeared.

"You are not going to be mad enough to follow any one into Sir Robert Cecil's hall!" argued De Guerre, at the same time seizing Springall's arm.

"Oh, that I should ever have lived to see you, sir, in league with a bogle! Why, I vow I had the mark of that devil's hand on me in black lumps—just as if I was burnt with what our scourer calls *ague-fortys*. As I am a living man, he went from off the brow of the cliff, just like a foam wreath."

"Pshaw! Spring; how can you or any one else tell 'who's who,' on a dark night?"

"Could I be deceived in the cut of his jib or mainsail, ye'r honour? to say nothing of the figure-head!—Am I a fool?"

"You are not over wise, just now, my gay sailor; so off to your hammock."

"And must I see no more of that old gentleman?"

"Not to-night, Spring; perhaps to-morrow he may give you satisfaction," added Walter, smiling at his own conceit.

The youth went off, not very steadily, to the little gate by which he entered; and a servant immediately announced to De Guerre, that Sir Robert Cecil waited for him in the supper-hall.

He followed the domestic through the great vestibule, which bore a more cheerful aspect than on the sad but memorable night of Hugh Dalton's most unwelcome visit. Al-

though the spring was considerably advanced, the *fagot* blazed up the huge chimney, and illumined every corner of the overgrown apartment. The grim portraits which graced the walls, looked more repugnant than usual in the red light that was thrown upon them by the glowing fire; while beneath hung the very suits of armour in which, if their most approved chroniclers are to be believed, they had performed feats of valour. Upon the table of massive marble were strewed sundry hawk's hoods, bells and jesses; some fishing-tackle, and a silver-mounted fowling-piece also appeared amid the melange; while a little black spaniel, of the breed that was afterwards distinguished by a royal name, was busily engaged in pulling the ears of a magnificent bound of the wolf kind, who, shaggy and sleepy, seemed little disposed to be roused from his lair by the caprices of the diminutive creature that hardly reached to the first joint of his fore-leg. The lesser animal, in accordance with the general custom of his kind, ran yelping and barking at the stranger as he advanced up the hall; while the more sagacious and dangerous dog raised his head, shook his ears, stretched forth his paws, and elevated his broad chest; then sniffed the air so as to be able to remember De Guerre if ever he needed to do so; seeing that he was escorted by the servant, and therefore, doubtless, a person of respectability, he composed himself again to rest as De Guerre entered the presence of Sir Robert Cecil."

A few weeks had worked a fearful change upon his countenance and form: the eyes were more hollow, the cheeks more pale, the hair ribanded with white, where but a little before there had been but few gray hairs; and the shoulders were much rounded since his interview with the Buccaneer. He proceeded courteously to meet his guest, bowing and expressing the honour he felt in being introduced (through the Lord's mercy) to the preserver of his friend. The Baronet had approached slowly towards De Guerre, during this salutation, but either his dim sight, or the obscurity of the farther end of the room, prevented his being at first struck with his appearance. As the young man advanced, Sir Robert Cecil's gaze was fastened on his countenance with a gasping earnestness, that shook every fibre of his frame; his lips trembled, and remained apart, and he seemed for a few moments unable to move to the seat he had quitted.

The 'friend' he had alluded to was seated in a carved chair near the fire, his foot placed upon a cushioned stool, and his arms folded over his bosom, his head rested on his chest, but his eyes were fixed on the beautiful face of Con-

stance Cecil, who had risen on the stranger's entrance; nor did it escape the notice of so keen an observer, that the lady's cheek was suddenly suffused by a deep hue of crimson, as suddenly succeeded by a pallor and trembling, that made her cling to the arm of Lady Frances Cromwell for support.

"I beg to present," he rose, and said, "to my worthy friend Sir Robert Cecil, and to you Lady Frances Cromwell, and to you also, Mistress Cecil, this young gentleman, by the name of Walter De Guerre, who, though of French extraction, hath doubtless had an English godfather, who hath favoured him with an English Christian name. And now, most worthy Baronet, as master of this mansion, I pray you to present me to him who hath a swift arm and a ready hand for the defence of an attacked soldier."

"Major Wellmore, young gentleman—a tried and trusty friend to the English Commonwealth and its Protector!" said Sir Robert at last; adding, as if in apology for his emotion—"Constance! this strange megrim in my head! And Constance, with the watchful care of an affectionate child, led him to his seat, presented him a glass of cordial; and not till he had declared himself quite recovered, did she return to her station on the low sofa, beside her friend Lady Frances Cromwell.

De Guerre was particularly struck, during the brief repast that followed, by the extraordinary change in the manner of his companion, who, from being an animated and sensible speaker, upon matters connected with the State, had become more like a mystified and mystifying preacher than a soldier, but whose out-pourings were listened to with reverence and attention by the company. The Cavalier felt himself ill at ease in his presence, and but for a governing motive, hereafter to be explained, would have withdrawn from the house when the supper was concluded, despite the specious invitation, and much pressing to remain; he, however, accepted the apartment provided for him by Sir Robert Cecil. The ladies, attended by their women, withdrew immediately afterwards, and, as Lady Frances kissed her friend's cheek, she whispered,

"Didst see how Major—plague upon me to forget his name—eyed both you and the handsome stranger?" And then she whispered so as to be quite inaudible, ending by saying,—while Constantia affectionately pressed her hand,—

"Ah! those holy eyes of blue, remaining so silent and so fixed, do more mischief than my poor little brown ones, that are ever roaming about seeking what they can devour, but securing no prey."

## CHAPTER X.

With that smooth falsehood, whose appearance charms,  
 And reason of each unwholesome doubt disarms;  
 Which to the lowest depths of guilt descends,  
 By vilest means pursues the vilest ends,  
 Wears friendship's mask for purposes of spite,  
 Fawns in the day and butchers in the night.

CHURCHILL.

THE dwelling of Sir Willmott Burrell was about eighteen or twenty miles from the island of Shepey, on the Kentish border. The mysterious companion of De Guerre had correctly stated, that at the period of his introduction to the Cecil family, the youth had little chance of meeting with his treacherous antagonist of the evening on which the remains of Lady Cecil were consigned to the tomb; the Knight having been, for some days previously, occupied upon certain weighty affairs within his own house. A bad landlord can never succeed in convincing his tenantry that he is a good man. The presence of Sir Willmott was by no means desirable to his poorer neighbours and dependants, by whom he was at once dreaded and disliked. Rarely, indeed, was it that a blessing ever followed the mention of his name; and, although his influence and authority were such as to render it dangerous to murmur against the one, or oppose the other, Sir Willmott had ample reason to know that he was no where surrounded by so many secret enemies as when residing upon his hereditary estate. The domestics who had served his progenitors had long been dismissed, and their places supplied by more subservient creatures, and more willing panders to the vices that had increased with his increasing years. Although he had taken especial care to surround himself with knaves of great apparent devotion, in order that his character might not suffer in the estimation of the few really religious personages by whom he was occasionally visited, it required considerable care to prevent their exposing, by their own depravity, the gross and iniquitous life which their master led. It is seldom that a uniform hypocrite is found among the uneducated; a more than ordinary degree of talent and prudence being necessary to sustain a character that is but assumed. Nature may be suppressed by habitual caution; but the meaner, though not the baser villain, finds appetite too strong for even interest to

control. The household of Sir Willmott Burrell was ill-governed, and the lessons which the master sometimes taught, but never practised, the servants neglected or—despised. The butler, the housekeeper, the steward, and the numerous insubordinate subordinates were evermore in a state of riot and debauchery: the evil had at length grown to such a pitch, that Burrell saw its danger, and more than once resolved to adopt the only remedy, and discharge them altogether; but upon such occasions, he overlooked one very important circumstance, namely, that he was in their power, and was consequently any thing but a free agent in his own house. Burrell knew himself in their toils, and at their mercy. Large sums of money might, perhaps, have purchased their silence, but such a mode of procuring safety was now beyond his reach; and although deeply desirous to rid himself of them before his marriage with Constantia Cecil, he scarcely conceived it possible to escape from their trammels, without subtracting from the fortune that was to accompany her hand. He dreaded the danger of confiding his difficulties to Sir Robert Cecil, by whom they were unsuspected; and his fine property was so considerably mortgaged, as to render an appeal to his ancient friends, the usurers, a matter of much difficulty, if not totally useless. Manasseh Ben Israel, indeed, he knew had an inexhaustible store, and a not unready hand, as he had, upon more than one occasion, experienced; but, villain as he was, he shrank from the idea of applying to him for assistance, at the very moment when he was thrusting the iron into his soul.

Burrell was seated alone in his library, musing over the labyrinth from which he saw no immediate prospect of escape; plan succeeding plan, as, unnoticed by him, the twilight had deepened into the night. His doors were ordered to be locked at an early hour—a command which, it is to be supposed, the servants obeyed or disobeyed according to their own pleasure.

The Lords' Commissioners, Fiennes and Lisle, who were travelling round the country on special business, had been his visitors for three or four days; and on the evening on which they took their departure, he was, as we have described him, musing in his library, upon no very amicable terms with himself, when his revrie was broken by a blow against the glass of an oriel window that was sunk deeply into an embrasure of the wall. He started from his seat, and was so alarmed at perceiving the face of a man close to the fretted frame work, as to draw forth a pistol, and present it towards the intruder. In an instant, the shivered fragments of an exquisitely tinted pane flew into the library, and a voice exclaimed,

## THE BUCCANEER.

"It's me!"

"And what is the motive of this destruction?" stormed forth the Master of Burrell, in an angry tone, proceeding at the same time to open the window; "were there not people enough below to bring up your message? and are there not doors enough for you to enter, without clambering twenty feet up a straight wall, and shattering this beautiful picture, the Marriage of St. Catherine, into a thousand pieces?"

"As to the marriage of St. Catherine," observed his visitor, stepping through the casement, "I wish I could break all marriages as easily; and, as to the motive, your honour, I did not like to wait quietly, and see a pistol-ball walk towards my witless pate, to convince, by its effects thereupon, the unbelieving world that Robin Hays had brains. As to the domestics, the doors were locked, and they, I do believe, (craving your pardon, sir,) too drunk to open them. As to the wall, it's somewhat straight, and slippery; but what signifies a wall to one who can be in safety on a tow-line, and only that between him and eternity? Thank God! there is nothing on my conscience to make my footing tremble,—or——"

"Robin Hays," interrupted Burrell at last, "I have listened to you with much patience, because I know you love to hear the sound of your own voice; if you bear either message or letter from: my worthy friend, Sir Robert Cecil, let me have it at once."

"You are in error, sir, under favour."

"Indeed! then to whom am I indebted for this visit; for I suppose you came not on your own account?"

"Ah, Sir Willmott!—you are always wise, Sir Willmott; truly it would be ill coming on my own account, seeing that I had no business of my own to bring me, therefore why should I come? and even if I had, Dapple Dumpling travels so slowly."

"This trifling is impertinent," exclaimed the Knight, angrily: "to your business."

"I hope it won't end in smoke, as it begins in fire," replied Robin, slyly presenting a roll of the tobacco vulgarly called pig-tail.

"Misshapen wretch!" retorted Burrell in a towering passion, flinging the roll directly in his face, "how dare you to trifle thus with your superiors? art drunk, or mad?"

"Neither, an please ye, Sir Willmott," replied Robin, replacing the tobacco in his bosom; "only, since you won't look into the pig-tail, perhaps you will tell me what I am to say to Hugh Dalton."

"Hugh Dalton! There, give it me; why did you not tell

me you came from the *Buccaneers*. Robin, you are a million times worse than a fool! There, sit, good Robin—But, no, light me yon lamp; the fire burns dimly. A murrain on't, I can't see! There, that will do."

While Burrell read Dalton's communication, thus whimsically but carefully conveyed, Robin had ample time to moralize on and observe all around him.

"That table," thought the Ranger, "is just a type of the times. The Bible, it can hardly be seen for the heap of foolish expositions, and preachments, in the shape of pamphlets, that crowd upon it. Just take from the Puritans their vain opinions, wild imaginations, false valuations, and the like, which they hang over the book that Barbara says has so much good in it, (just as the Catholics at San Eustatia trick out the Saviour's figure,) and what poor shrunken minds they'd have! Then the bottle and glass: that, I'm afraid, typifies the Cavalier; the poor Cavalier! who clings so firmly to the worn, and lets go the stronger rope. But mark how the filthy liquor stands beside the pure book!—even so are the just and the unjust mingled. Ah! he has been praying with the Lords' Commissioners; then drinking, and so forth, the instant their backs were turned! Yet, God hath made the double-faced villain of good proportions, so that a woman can look on him with love, though his heart—*augh!*—I wouldn't have his heart for his lands, no, nor for his fine person either. Barbara can't abide him; she always says he has a black look,—and so he has. But hark! there's knocking at the gate, and loud knocking too—Sir Willmott, as the servants can't hear, so can't answer, shall I go down?"

Burrell was so much occupied with his letter, that he heard neither the knocking nor Robin's question, but sat, his eyes staring on the paper, as if the words were of fire. Nor was it a long epistle, though sufficiently important to rivet his whole attention. The contents were as follows:

"SIR,

*April the 6th, 1656.*

"Agreeably to your instructions, I went to the house at St. Vallery, where you told me I was to meet the lady of whom we spoke; but she had left harbour a few hours before I entered. With much trouble I succeeded in tracing her to a very odd sort of dwelling, a little outside the town, yet not in time to overtake her or her attendant. Some said one thing, and some another; but I could gather no information to be depended on. I remained nearly nine days in the neighbourhood, watching every vessel that came in or went out; nevertheless, I am persuaded that she has embarked for England: how, is still a mystery.

"Yours,

*FIRE-FLY."*

"The fellow is careful enough: can it be possible he has played me false! Yet, where the motive, or what?" mused Burrell aloud. The knocking at the door was repeated, but was only answered by the loud baying of a brace of hounds. "And are the rascals really drunk!" inquired their master in a piteous tone, roused at last to a sense of what was passing around him.

"Ay, faith, sir; had I not as well go down? for, though ill-apparelled as a serving-man, methinks I could do the civilities better than the night-wind that howls so cursedly round the entry."

"Ay, go, go! only see that I be not disturbed, unless, indeed, it be some person I must see—some one of consequence."

"Ay," muttered Robin: "so much for modern hospitality!" and he hastened to undo the fastening.

As the chains fell, a small bent figure, completely enveloped in a fur cloak, entered the hall, closely followed by a swarthy attendant, whose high features, quick sparkling eyes, and downcast look bespoke him one of the tribe of Israel.

"Is Sir Willmott Burrell within?" inquired the stranger, letting fall the cloak that had been closely muffled round his face: he spoke, however, in so foreign an accent, that it was a moment or two before Robin could reply.

"I demanded of thee if Sir Willmott Burrell of Burrell were within?" repeated the old man; and as Robin observed him more attentively, he perceived that he was dressed in the peculiar fashion of the high-born Jews: his beard descended nearly to his girdle, and his head was surmounted by a perpendicular cap of yellow silk.

"Sir Willmott Burrell is not well," replied Robin; "but I will take your name, if it please ye, and return speedily with his commands."

"Manasseh Ben Israel demands instant parley with the Master of Burrell."

Robin did not bow, because, as an humble Cavalier and a proud Christian, he held it a point of duty to hate and avoid the despised race to which the stranger belonged; but he made a respectful answer, for the riches of the Rabbi and the favour of Cromwell were not to be contemned. He then proceeded along the hall, and up some narrow stairs, called private, as they led only to the library, and was crossing the apartment for the purpose of announcing Ben Israel, when the Jew, who had closely and unobservedly followed his footsteps with so light a tread as even to escape Robin's ears, passed him suddenly, and as suddenly Burrell of Burrell



sprang from his seat, as if struck by a musket-ball. The old man stood before him, his features working, his lips moving, but no articulate sound coming forth—his entire frame agitated, almost convulsed; while Burrell, exerting every power of his mind to the contest, was the first to move. He stepped towards the Jew, extending his hand in token of amity. Ben Israel touched it not, but raised his arm, pointing his skinny and shrivelled finger towards Burrell, until it came on a level with his countenance; then, by a desperate exertion, the cracked, strained voice forced a passage through his parched throat, and he exclaimed—

“My child!—my only one!—Zillah!—my beloved, my only, only child! Do you remember your own mother, who travailed for ye, brought ye forth in pain, and carried, ye, and nourished ye in her bosom? Do ye ever hope to have a child, who will tend, and serve, and watch over you, as mine once did over me? If so, tell, tell me where mine is!—I will bless you for the knowledge! I, an old man, whose beard is white, implore you who have destroyed her, to tell me where she is!”

The Jew flung his cap on the floor, and prostrated himself before Burrell, who immediately raised him, and in his most persuasive tone sought to sooth and assure the Rabbi he had been in every respect misled and misinformed.

“Sit, good Ben Israel, and comfort yourself; you have, I swear to you, been grossly imposed upon by some malignants whom I must—Robin! hunt out the knaves, and bring some wine—the best in the old bin, for my good friend. How could you, sir, suppose me capable of betraying the confidence you reposed when you introduced me to the abode in which your fair daughter dwelt! But granting I had the ascendancy over her, which from your speech you seem to infer, how—”

“Sir Christian, stop!” interrupted Ben Israel, who, now that the first burst of his feelings had found vent, had composed himself so as to meet his wily adversary with tolerable fortitude: “Sir Christian, stop! There are two classes of human kind your sect deceive without regret—betray without compunction—and destroy, body and soul, without remorse—women and Jews. My daughter, my lost child, was both. It is naught, sir, naught—mere pastime—women’s hearts and reputations, and old men’s gray hairs! Alas! alas! and is such the religion of England?” The old man bent his head, and moaned heavily; then, after a little space of time, raised himself, and said, “In the name of the God of Jacob, I will take you point by point! Reply unto my questioning; and, if thou canst, acquit thyself.”—A ray of

hope darted over his expressive features, like a beam of light athwart a thunder cloud. "But no," he continued, his countenance again darkening, "it cannot be—it cannot be—"

"Worthy Ben Israel! excellent Rabbi!" replied Burrell; "dissect me as you will; and if I answer not thy expectation——"

"Too truly wilt thou answer my expectation," said the Jew. "The Lord of Hosts be praised that these iniquities are unpractised by the children of my people! The innocent lamb torn from the fold; or, what is worse, decoyed from the tents of her fathers! Had she been dead, I could have said, 'The Lord's will be done.' He hath taken the child back into her mother's bosom. But answer unto me these points: Didst often see Zillah?"

"I certainly did see your daughter at times, during my stay in Paris."

"And why, having delivered my messages? Of what importance ought thy visits to have been to one of the despised race?"

"You surely would not impute evil to my inquiring if your daughter wished to write to her father when I forwarded despatches to England?"

"Strange, then, she should never have availed herself of such kindness. Did she give no reason for this neglect of her parent?"

"I saw so little of her," replied Burrell carelessly, "that I really forget."

The Rabbi shook his head.

"Perhaps, then, Sir Willmot Burrell, you can remember this trinket, and inform me how it came into my daughter's hands: it was forced from her previously to her flight."

Burrell started, for it was a miniature of himself, which he had given her in the bud of his affection. At last he brazened out an assurance that, however like, it was not his; that he could not tell how young ladies obtained miniature pictures; that, if the Rabbi would look, he would observe the hair and eyes to be much lighter."

"Man!" exclaimed the Rabbi, fixing his keen black eye upon Burrell, "away from before me! Guilt and falsehood are on your lip. Your eye, the eye of the proud Christian, quails before the gaze of the despoiled and despised Jew; were you innocent, you would stand firm as I do now, erect in your Maker's image. Do you not tremble lest God's own lightning's blast you? Did you ever read, and, reading, believe the Christian story of Ananias and Sapphira!"

If Burrell had possessed an atom of human feeling, he

would have sunk abashed to the earth, and entreated the forgiveness of the Rabbi, whose flashing eyes and extended features glared and swelled with indignation; but the only two emotions that at the time contended within him were cowardice and pride. Had he the power, gladly would he have struck the Jew to death, as a punishment for what he deemed his insolence; but he feared the protecting and avenging hand of Cromwell, who never resigned a cherished purpose or a cherished person, and whose esteem for the learned Rabbi was perfectly known, and much talked of about the Court.

"You cannot avoid crediting me for meekness, Ben Israel," he said, without, however, raising his eyes from the ground, (for his blood boiled in his veins, though he spoke in a gentle tone;) "you have come into my house, rated me upon a foul charge, and will not permit me to speak in my own defence. Take a cup of this wine, and then I will hear, if you can adduce it, farther proof than that false portrait."

The Rabbi touched not the proffered beverage, but withdrew from his vest sundry letters, which he unfolded with a trembling hand: they were the communications he had received from the Polish Jew, with whose family at Paris his daughter had remained. He stated Burrell's extraordinary attention to Zillah, during his residence abroad—the frequent letters that passed between them under pretence of a correspondence with her father—her having received others from England since Burrell's return—her total change of manner—and, finally, her having quitted his house, and his being unable to discover where she had gone. Strong suspicions were added that she had followed Burrell to, and was now in, England; and there was a long and formal expression of regret from the Polish Jew that he had ever admitted the Christian beyond the threshold of his door.

The villain breathed more freely when he ascertained that the fugitive had not been traced from St. Vallery; and he felt he could have braved the affair with perfect ease and indifference, but for the information conveyed by Dalton's letter, and the consequent dread of Zillah's appearing before him, perhaps at the very moment that the often-asserted, and sworn to, lie passed his lips. It was now more difficult to dissemble than he had ever yet found it; he saw clearly that his oaths and protestations made but little impression upon the mind of Ben Israel, who filled up every pause either by lamentations for his daughter, execrations on her seducer, or touching appeals to one whose feelings were centred in self, and who therefore had little sympathy for

sorrow that would move a heart of stone. Burrell was so thoroughly overpowered by the events of the evening, that the only point of exertion on which his mind rallied, was a strong wish to rid himself of the Jew as speedily as possible, so that he might find opportunity to collect and arrange his thoughts—it therefore occurred to him to assume the bearing of injured innocence, as protestations had been of no avail; he accordingly said, in a tone and with a manner so earnest, that at the moment it almost destroyed the suspicions of the Rabbi:—

“Sir, I have over and over asserted enough to convince any rational person that I know nothing of the crime you impute to me; having, in my own estimation, performed all that could be required, I must now withdraw. If you please to lay your statement before his highness, I will defend myself, as I have now done, and let him judge between thee and me.”

“I have not been yet able to gain speech with the chosen in Israel,” replied Manasseh; “he hath been much from home on secret service for the good of his people.”

Burrell exulted at this knowledge, and again protested his innocence in the strongest terms. Manasseh rose to depart. Burrell pressed him to remain; but the old man resolutely refused.

“I am about to go forth from your dwelling. If you have not been the seducer of my child, I crave your pardon in deep humility, and will do penance in sackcloth and ashes for having wrongfully accused you; but,” he added bitterly, “if you have wronged me, and devoted her soul to destruction, may the curse of the old Jew enter into your veins, and curdle the red blood to a hot and destroying poison!—may the flowers of the spring be to you scentless and revolting!—may the grass wither under your footsteps!—may the waters of the valley be even as molten lead unto your parched lips!—may——”

“Dog of an unbeliever!” exclaimed Burrell, whose temper could no longer brook the taunting curses of the old man, and whose coward spirit quailed beneath them, “hold thy foul tongue, lest I pluck it from between thy teeth. Had I been a circumcised Jew, and thou a Christian, I could not have listened with more humility; and this is the reward of my forbearance—curses deep and bitter as the waters of the dead sea.”

“They cannot harm, if thou art innocent. I have neither broken bread nor tasted salt within thy walls; and now I shake the dust from off my feet upon thy threshold. Thy words at first were of honey and the honey-comb, but now

are they as gall. Others must deal with thee. The prayer of the bereaved father was as a tinkling cymbal in thine ears; but the curse—the curses knocked at thy heart, and it trembled. Others must deal with thee.”

Manasseh Ben Israel repeated the curse with terrible energy; then shaking the dust from his sandals, he passed, and entered, with his attendant, the carriage that awaited him at the gate.

Burrell was convinced, and humbled by the conviction, that an irresistible impulse had compelled him to desert his sophistry, and stand forth in his real character before one who had the ear of the Protector, and whose religious persuasion had not prevented his advancement, or his being regarded as a man of extraordinary mental attainments, even in a country, the prejudices of which, always deeply-rooted, were at that time peculiarly directed against the Jews. This people were devoted in their attachment to Cromwell; and it was believed that they would not have scrupled to declare him the Messiah, could they have traced his descent in any degree, however remote, to the dwellers in Judah. Manasseh had mixed so much with Christians, and had been treated by the Protector so completely as an equal, that he retained but little of the servility of tone or manner, and less of the cringing and submissive demeanour, that characterized his tribe; he therefore spoke boldly to Sir Willmott Burrell, after a burst of strong and bitter feeling. He knew himself protected by the ruler of England, and felt undaunted in the presence of one he could easily destroy; but then he was a father, and as such impelled by Nature to adopt every expedient that might promote the disclosure of a secret on which almost his life depended, and which, he doubted not, was in some shape or other in the keeping of his wily opponent.

“A pretty scrape my villainies have brought me into!” thought Burrell, as he returned to his chamber; “the girl will come over—that stops a wedding. Suppose I were to take Zillah to wife—the old rascal would not give me a marvelled. Suppose, before I have secured Constance, Cromwell listens to the Rabbi’s tale—he will forbid my marriage, to please the accursed Jew; and I—may blow my brains out. Suppose I marry at once—But how? Lady Cecil not many weeks dead!—I must manage it, however,” he continued, pacing the apartment, while Robin, who had ascertained the impossibility of rousing the ill-governed menials from their state of hopeless debauchery, amused himself by counting the number of times the Master of Burrell walked up and down the room. At length, finding such dull watch-

ing wearisome, he ventured to enter, and inquire if he were to remain at Burrell House, or return to the Gull's Nest.

"Well thought on, Robin Hays," said the Knight, as if roused, and not unpleasantly, from himself and his thoughts; "You will rest here to-night, and accompany me to Cecil Place on the morrow. See to these rioters, of whom I must rid my house."

"You had better do it then immediately," retorted Robin, "or they will save you trouble by ridding you of your house."

"True, good Robin; you are ready-witted."

"And to keep up my character, I'll back to Cecil Place this very hour," muttered Robin, as he closed the door; "there is one there who must not tarry the coming of Sir Willmott Burrell."

## CHAPTER XI.

But such it is: and though we may be taught  
 To have in childhood life, ere love we know,  
 Yet life is useless till by reason taught,  
 And love and reason up together grow.

SIR W. DAVENANT.

"AND, indeed, my grave Lady Constance plays with the poor fish in a very sportsmanlike manner; only, methinks, a little too shy, and a trifle too sensitive! Marry, girl! what a most yielding, docile, and affectionate wife you would make!—like one of the heroines in the ancient Spanish romances; or such a one as—Judith!—no—for you would never venture to chop off a man's head—Stay—did she so?—or—Barbara! you are well read in Scripture history; and though you ply your needle so industriously, that will not prevent your calling to mind some of the holy women in the Bible, to whom your mistress may be compared."

Barbara Iverk, who had no other duty at Cecil Place than to wait upon the young heiress or assist in her embroidery, was considered and treated more as an humble companion than a menial; and Lady Frances Cromwell talked just as freely to Mistress Cecil in her presence, as if they were perfectly alone. Nor was such confidence ever abused by the gentle girl. She moved within her small circle like an attendant satellite upon a brilliant star—silent and submissive—yet ever in her place, ever smiling, innocent and happy—

"A maid whom there were few to praise,  
 And very few to love."

Simple and single-minded, her soul had never been contaminated by the idea, much less the utterance, of falsehood. Even to Constantia, the fulness of her worth and fidelity was unknown; although the bare contemplation of Barbara's ever parting from her, was one of actual pain.

She replied to the lively question of the Lady Frances in her usual straightforward and unassuming manner: a manner that afforded considerable amusement to the merry trifter, by whom the little Puritan was commonly spoken of, while absent, as "the fresh primrose."

"Indeed, my Lady, I do not like mixing up profane and holy things together."

"Fie, Barbara! to call your mistress profane. Constance, do put down those heavy poems of Giles Fletcher, and listen to your bower-maiden, describing you as one of the profane."

Constance looked up and smiled; while poor Barbara endeavoured to free herself from the charge with earnestness and humility.

"My Lady Frances, I ask your pardon; but I can hardly, I fear, make you understand what I mean. I know that Mistress Cecil is always aiming at the excellence to which the holy women of Scripture attained,—but——"

"Then she has not attained their holiness in your estimation? She is too earthly still?"

"She is my dear and noble lady, and to know her is to love her," replied Barbara, her brown, affectionate eyes swimming in tears at the wilful perversion of her words.

"May I beg, Lady Frances, that you will condescend not to question so poor and simple a girl as myself on what I know so little of?"

"There you are again in error, Barbara," retorted her tormentor, who, like most wits, cherished a jest more than the feelings of those she jested with; "I condescend when questioning, not when silent."

Barbara made no reply, and Lady Frances, who was at the same time pulling to pieces a superb fan of ostrich feathers, proceeded to open her light battery against Constantia.

"How is Sir Robert this morning? I wish he were rid of the rheumatism, and with us again. I have hardly seen him since the valiant De Guerre made his appearance among us, except at dinner; and, indeed, he looks ill, though—leigh ho!—I wish all papas were as accommodating, and let their daughters flirt with whom they like."

"Flirt, Lady Frances!"

"Yes, flirt, Mistress Cecil! Is there any thing appalling in the word? though I believe it somewhat of the newest. Now, poor I have no skill in these matters! If I see a pretty fellow, I care not who knows it; I like a jest, a laugh, tempered with all rightful modesty. I do not prim my mouth—tutor my eyes into sobriety—nor say amen, like old Will's Macbeth, to those who say 'God bless us!' I laugh my laugh, and look my look, and say my say, though I am youngest, and, by God's grace, wildest of his Highness the Protector's children."

"Where got you your gay spirit, Lady Frances?" said Constantia, rising and stepping towards her.



"My mother is a discreet matron as need be, but my father was not always one of the gloomy rulers of this gloomy land: he had his wild days, though it is treason to speak of them now; and, in sooth, he sometimes forgets that young blood runs swifter than old—How he lectures poor Richard!"

"The Lord Richard is not cast in his great father's mould; he is a gentler and a feebler spirit; one who loves to hear of, or to read of, great deeds, rather than to act them. Lady Fauconberg is more like your father."

"My sister Mary would certainly have made a fine man. It was one of Nature's blunders to convert such coarse clay into a woman."

"She has a noble mind, Frances, though not so holy a one as the Lady Claypole."

"Well, dear Constance, you are very good to bear with me. Suppose, now, my father, instead of sending me here, had commanded that I should sojourn and mystify with that righteous Mrs. Lambert, whom he magnifies into a model of holiness; what a time I should have passed! Why, the nuns, whom the holy Sexburga placed up yonder, had not as much loneliness; don't you think the place was admirably adapted for an elopement? I am certain—nay, you need not smile—for I am quite certain, that every one of the seventy-seven maidens, of whom history tells us, including the charming Ermenilda herself, fully made up their minds to run off with the Danes before they came to the island. I wish, though, that your father could be persuaded to consider this only a summer residence, for it must be a little dreary, I think. Not that I feel it such, for you are so kind; and just as we were beginning to grow a little dull or so, a flourish—and enter Walter De Guerre—under the auspices of Major Wellmore! Ha! ha! ha! Well, it has amused me so much. He certainly is a most charming person, and if *one*, who is not here, were here, I should be inclined to tease him a little by my vast admiration of this gentleman. By the way, Sir Willmott Burrell has little reason to thank Major Wellmore for this new introduction; though it must be quite delightful to make either a lover or a husband jealous. Ah, I see you do not agree with me, I did not expect you would; but, do you know, I have taken it into my head that this De Guerre is not De Guerre."

"Indeed! who is he then?"

"That, Constantia, is exactly what I want to know—and I think you could unravel the mystery."

"My dear Frances, you are a very unaccountable person; always playing false yourself, you hardly ever give people credit for being true."

"You are vastly complimentary. Ah, Constance, when you come to Hampton, you must learn some court observances. When we were children together, we spoke truth."

"Were we not very happy then?"

"We were," said Frances, drawing a heavy sigh; "but how changed the times since then! Constance, those who walk along a precipice may well dread falling. Gay, giddy as I am, Cromwell has not a child who glories in him more than I do."

"And well you may," added Constance, whose dignity of soul led her to appreciate, with as much judgment as enthusiasm, the extraordinary man who commanded the admiration, not only of England, but of Europe. "Well may you be proud of the most successful statesman, the most resolute general, the most useful Christian that ever governed a state. By his power he holds our enemies in subjection; and guides our friends by his wisdom. I am but a poor politician, yet, methinks, I could almost worship your father for the spirit and humanity with which he succours those poor persecuted Vandois, who have kept their faith pure as the breath of their native valleys: when I think of this, even the conqueror is forgotten in the man."

"You are a dear noble creature," exclaimed Frances, as she gazed with admiration upon the animated and expressive countenance of her companion; then encircling her neck, and kissing her cheek, with that delightful warmth of manner, which can spring only from warmth of feeling, she continued, "I wish, my love, that flush were always on your cheek. You nourish some secret sorrow, Constance; nay, I am sure you do; and I will write and say so to my sister Claypole, who is worthy to be your confidant, as well as your god-mother, though I am not. Nay, nay, I know it well: I admire, but do not quite understand you—The heavens are given us to hope for, and the sun to look upon, and—But dear me! that would be—a simile! I vow that sounded like rhyme; but here comes reason, in the shape of our new Knight. Adieu! dear Constantia!—Barbara! that is surely Robin Hays, groping among the slopes like a huge hedgehog. Did you not want to consult him as to the management of the peewit's eggs?"

"In truth, yes, my Lady," replied Barbara, rising from a half-finished carnation: "May I go, mistress?"

Constance assented.

"May I go, mistress?" repeated Lady Frances, mimicking Barbara's tone and courtesy, in her light-hearted gaiety.

"Yes," replied Constantia firmly, "I would rather you did; for I have something particular to say to Major Wellmore's friend."

"Now, is not that just like Constance Cecil?" thought Lady Frances, as she left the room; "another would have said any thing rather than the truth—Yet is truth a noble thing: something to venerate as well as love—the best of virtues, the wisest of counsellors, and the firmest of friends.

Constance rose from her seat as the Cavalier entered; but there was an expression of deep sorrow over his whole countenance, that was almost immediately communicated to hers. What an extraordinary and undefinable tie is that which binds souls and sympathies together—the voice, that is heard only by the ear of affection—the look, that only one can understand—the silent thrill of happiness or of anguish, communicated by a smile or by a sigh! The world may sneer at, or may condemn; yet most true it is, that they who love with the most purity and the most truth, draw nearest to that great Spirit who is the perfection of both!

"I am come," said De Guerre, "to bid for awhile farewell to Mistress Cecil; "to thank her for the kindness I have received under this roof; and to assure her that it can never be forgotten."

"You have received but little attention—too little, indeed—yet, my father's health—our recent heavy affliction, will, I am sure, plead for us, and win an excuse. I was not, however, aware that your departure would come so suddenly. Is my father apprized of it?"

"He is not:—forgive me, lady; but I could not avoid saying how much and how truly I have felt the kind consideration you have bestowed upon one who, however worthy, I hope, in many respects, has nevertheless deceived you."

"De Guerre may deceive me," replied Constance, with considerable emotion, extending one hand as she spoke, and covering her face with the other, "De Guerre may deceive me, but Walter, *dear* Walter, never."

The young man took her offered hand, and pressed it affectionately to his lips. "Ah! how soon you saw in the Cavalier the companion and playmate of your childhood, though you believed him dead! Women have quick eyes, and warm hearts for old friends. Unrecognised by my nurse—by your father,—yet discovered by you—by you only, Constance! I need not say, do not betray me; do not breathe even to those walls who it is that has entered within them; let it remain secret as the grave—But I need not urge you thus, for treachery is not in your nature; let me talk of other things, and ask by what token, Constance, did you trace me through the disguise that years, and the burning sun of many a parched land, have thrown over my features and my form?"

"It was your voice that struck me first,—some tones and modulations, that I well remembered when you called my dog:—then the unforgotten locket which you placed in my hand, which, when I had seen you, I knew could have been placed there by no other:—then—" Constance paused and blushed, she ought to have felt angry at the liberty that had been taken with her tresses, but she gave no expression to such a feeling; and the pause was broken by the Cavalier, who drew from his bosom the beautiful braid of which the maiden had been robbed.

The colour on Constantia's cheek was succeeded by a deadly paleness.

"Ah! what a moment it was, by that old temple, the lily triumphing over the rose on your fair cheek, even more than now, yet with such mild and gentle triumph, one scarce could wish it less; your eyes veiled by those soft lashes—Well, no more—I will say no more of this. I tried my poor skill to call you back to life, and, just as I succeeded, your companion and attendant came in sight. Since then, this dear memento has nestled near my heart, a shield against evil, and against evil thoughts. What! still so pale? you must be ill, my sweet friend," he inquired tenderly.

"No, Walter, not in body; but wherefore should you bear that braid so near you!"

"Sweet Constance, may I now call you by that dear name! Oh, how my heart rebelled against the sound 'Mistress Cecil!—Truly is love a republican, for he does not recognise titles; though, perhaps, it were better to describe him as a despot, acknowledging none that are not of his own creation. Why should I not wear the braid! Though now an outlawed man, it may not be always thus; the time will come when my own arm shall win the way to glory and to fortune."

"I doubt it not—I doubt it not;—but—save that nothing can make your fortunes a matter of indifference to the friend and companion of your childhood—I can have no greater interest in you, nor you in me. But why prevent my saying to my father that the lost bird is found? Methinks I would gladly know with him the mysteries of your disappearance, and the still greater one of your concealment; suffer that I tell—" The Cavalier smiled a smile so moody, so full of sad expression, that she paused.

"Not so; I cannot explain any thing: perhaps (if your words be serious) the time may never come when I can explain. As to your father, if you ever valued Walter, I charge you, even as you now value his life, that you give hint to no human being of his existence. I am sure you

will keep my secret; strange as may seem the request, still you will grant it."

"Yet surely, Walter, you may confide in one who sorrowed for her playmate, with a lengthened and deep grief; but"—she slowly added, observing the altered expression of his countenance, "remember, I can only be to you a friend."

The words were uttered in a tone not to be misconceived. The Cavalier understood and felt it.

"Better, then, that I had gone forth, as I was about to do, in ignorance that any here recognised the ruined and out-cast Walter! Can there be truth in the rumour, that one so young, so beautiful, bearing the softened impress of a noble and immortal mind upon a brow so lofty, is a willing sacrifice to a coward and villain? Did I not hear you, with my own ears, protest to the Lady Frances Cromwell, that, of your own free will, you would never marry this Sir Willmott Burrell? and, if it be so, if you spoke truth then, who dare compel you, wealthy and high-born, to give your hand where your heart is not? Oh, you are not the free true-hearted girl, that, twelve years ago, leaped upon your native hills to meet the sunshine and the breeze, and often—alas! alas! that it should only have been in mere sportiveness—declared that—But no matter—I see it all, and, future Lady of Burrell, bid you farewell and for ever."

Constance replied with tears, yet calmly and firmly; "Walter, be not cruel; or at least be not unjust. You were ever impetuous, but also ever ready to repair the evil you had done. It is ill of you to use so harsh a word against one who has never wronged you. Alas! could you but read my heart, you would also judge of me otherwise; but think of me as your friend—your fervent and faithful friend—I will not prove unworthy."

The Cavalier was about to reply, when Robin Hays was ushered into the room by Barbara, who immediately withdrew. After bowing with due respect to Constance, he was about to whisper into the ear of the Cavalier, who, however, desired him to speak out, as he had naught to conceal from that lady. The Ranger seemed but little astonished at receiving such a command, and without farther ceremony proceeded.

"I did hope, sir, that you would have left Cecil Place before this; Sir Willmott Burrell will, I am certain, arrive within an hour: and you know it is the Skipper's earnest desire that you should not meet."

"Robin, you told me all this but a little time past; and I know not why I am to hear it again. I have naught to fear from this Burrell."

"It would be certainly unsafe, were there a possibility of his suspecting you, for his—" Again Constantia interrupted herself; she had been on the point of betraying her knowledge of Sir Willmott's jealous and impatient temper; and, after a pause, she added, "but there is little danger of that; as a boy, he never saw you; and he must respect the friend of Major Wellmore."

"Ah, madam!" observed Robin, "he is no respecter of persons; and I see no reason why two should meet again, who have already so roughly handled each other."

"Where did they meet?" inquired Constance eagerly.

"There is no time to tell the story now, lady," replied Robin impatiently. "As I see you know this gentleman, and knowing him, are too generous not to be interested in his favour, urge, I beseech you, his instant departure from Cecil Place. Surely I can explain every thing as well as he. It was Dalton's wish——"

"I bitterly grieve to hear that you have aught to do with so bold, so bad a man as Dalton," said Constance hastily; "his name brings to my remembrance feelings of undefined pain, for which I cannot account. It is long since I have heard of him; but something poor Barbara communicated to me in her innocence, made me suspect he had been here. Go then; and take my prayers, and (though nothing worth, it may be,) my blessing. And now, farewell—farewell—at least for a time!"

"We must meet again, Constance! say only that you will see me once more before——"

"By heavens!" exclaimed Robin, "you stand dallying here, and there is Sir Willmott himself coming down the avenue at full speed! Lady, I entreat your pardon for my boldness—But go, lady, go, I beseech you!—for then, and not till then, will he depart."

Constance did not trust herself in the room a moment longer. After briefly collecting her thoughts, which had laboured unceasingly to unravel the mysteries that surrounded the Cavalier, she entered her father's chamber. He had been evidently suffering from illness, and was seated in a large easy chair, his feet resting upon cushions, while the Reverend Jonas Fleetword read from time to time out of sundry pious books that were placed on a table before him. The preacher paused as she approached, and signified his intention of walking forth "to meet the man of Burrell," who, he understood from the wild youth called Robin Hays, was to arrive ere noon. It was a precious opportunity, one not to be neglected, for cultivating the rich seed sown in that holy land.

When the worthy divine was fairly out of the room, Constance delivered a message from the Cavalier, stating that he had been obliged to leave Cecil Place without taking a personal leave of his kind host; and repeated his expressions of gratitude for the attentions he had experienced during his brief sojourn.

"Thank God, he is gone!" replied the Baronet, drawing his breath freely, as if relieved from a painful oppression. "Introduced as he was, it was impossible not to treat him with respect, but he strangely disturbed me. Did you not think him a cold, suspicious youth?"

"I cannot say I did, sir."

"You are singularly unsuspicious, Constance, for one so wise: you ought to learn distrust; it is a dark, a dreadful, but a useful lesson."

"Methinks one has not need to study how to be wretched; suspicion has to me ever seemed the school of misery."

The Baronet made no reply to this observation, but soon after abruptly exclaimed—

"He will not come again, I suppose."

Constance did not know.

He then fancied he could walk a little; and, pressing to his side the arm on which he leaned, said—

"Ah, my child! a willing arm is more delightful to a parent than a strong one. Wilt always love thy father, Constance?"

"My dear father, do you doubt it?"

"No, my child; but suppose that any circumstance should make me poor?"

"You will find what a nice waiting-maid your daughter is."

"Suppose I were dishonoured?"

"Public honour is given and taken by a breath, and is therefore of little worth; but the private and more noble honour is in our own keeping: my father keeps it safely."

"But suppose that I *deserved* the ill word of all mankind?"

"My dear father, why trouble yourself or me with such a thought?—if it so happened, you would still be my parent; but such an event is impossible."

The Baronet sighed, as if in pain. Constance looked anxiously into his face, and noted that a cold and clammy perspiration stood thickly on his brow.

"You had better sit down, dear sir."

"No, my child, I shall be better for a little air; let us go into the library."

As they entered the room, a scene of solemn drollery presented itself, that a humorous painter might well desire to portray. Kneeling on a high-backed and curiously-

carved chair, was seen the lean, lanky figure of Fleetword, placed within a foot of the sofa, on which, in the most uneasy manner and discontented attitude, sat the Master of Burrell. The preacher had so turned the chair that he leaned over it, pulpit-fashion; holding his small pocket Bible in his hand, he declaimed to his single auditor with as much zeal and energy as if he were addressing the Lord Protector and his court. The effect of the whole was heightened by the laughing face and animated figure of Lady Frances Cromwell, half-concealed behind an Indian skreen, from which she was, unperceived, enjoying the captivity of Burrell, whom, in her half-playful, half-serious moods, she invariably denominated "the false black Knight." Fleetword, inwardly rejoicing at the increase of his congregation, of whose presence, however, he deemed it wisdom to appear ignorant, had just exclaimed—

"Has not the word of the Lord come to me, as to Elisha in the third year? and shall I not do His bidding?"

"Thou art a wonder in Israel, doubtless," said Burrell, literally jumping from his seat, and that so rudely as nearly to overturn the pulpit arrangement of the unsparing minister; "but I must salute my worthy friend, whom I am sorry to see looking so ill."

"Perform thy salutations, for they are good," said the preacher, adjusting the chair still farther to his satisfaction, "and after that I will continue; for it is pleasant repeating the things that lead unto salvation."

"You would not, surely, sir," said Lady Frances, coming forward and speaking in an under-tone, "continue to repeat poor Lady Cecil's funeral sermon before her husband and daughter?—they could not support it."

"You speak like the seven wise virgins," replied Fleetword, putting one of his long limbs to the ground, as if to descend; and then as suddenly drawing it back, he added, "But the Lord's servant is not straitened; there are many rivers in Judah, so the faithful may drink at another stream."

"I wish you would come with me," said Lady Frances, rightly interpreting the entreating look of Constantia, "or rather, come with us, for I am sure Mistress Cecil has much to say to, and I have much to hear from, you: we will leave Sir Robert and Sir Willmott to talk over the affairs of this great nation; temporal matters must be attended to, you know: and though"—she looked for a moment at Burrell, whose countenance had not yet regained its usual suavity—"I am sorry to be the means of depriving Sir Willmott of much necessary instruction, I have no doubt you will make up the deficiency to him at some future time."



## CHAPTER XII.

The soote season that bud and blome forth brings,  
 With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale,  
 The nightingale with fethers new she sings,  
 The turtle to her mate hath told the tale,  
 Somer is come, for every spray now springs.

\* \* \* \* \*

And thus I see among these pleasant things,  
 Eche care decay; and yet my sorrow springs.

SORREY.

It may be readily imagined that Burrell remained in a state of extreme perplexity after the receipt of Dalton's letter, and the departure of Ben Israel. He saw there was now but one course that could preserve him from destruction, and resolved to pursue it:—to cajole or compel Sir Robert Cecil to procure the immediate fulfilment of the marriage contract between himself and Constance. This was his only hope, the sheet-anchor to which he alone trusted; he felt assured that, if the Protector discovered his infamous seduction of the Jewess Zillah, he would step in, from a twofold motive, and prevent his union: in that he esteemed both the Rabbi's wisdom and his wealth, and was most unlikely to suffer one on whom his favour had been bestowed so freely, to be injured and insulted with impunity; and next, inasmuch as he entertained a more than ordinary regard for Constance Cecil, the child of an ancient friend, and the god-daughter of the Lady Claypole. Of this regard he had, within a few weeks, given a striking proof, in having selected Cecil Place above more splendid mansions, and the companionship of its youthful mistress, in preference to many more eager candidates for such an honour, when, for certain weighty reasons, he deemed a temporary absence from the Court essential to the comfort and prosperity of the Lady Frances.

The friendship that had subsisted between the family of the Protector and that of Sir Robert Cecil, was, as we have intimated, not of recent growth; the Lady Cromwell and Lady Cecil had been friends long before the husband of the former had been called to take upon him the high and palmy state

that links his name so gloriously, so honourably—but, alas! in some respects also, so unhappily with the history of his country. When an humble and obscure individual at Ipswich, the visits of the Lady Cecil were considered as condescensions upon her part towards friends of a respectable yet of a much inferior rank. Times had changed; but he who was now a king in all but the name, and far beyond ordinary kings in the power to have his commands obeyed as widely as the winds of heaven could convey them—remembered the feelings that held sway in lowlier, yet perhaps in happier days; and, although rarely a guest at Cecil Place, he continued a staunch friend to the family, to whom he had upon several occasions extended the simple hospitalities of Hampton Court.

Towards the Lady Constance, his sentiments of respect and regard had been frequently and markedly expressed. When he beheld the fading beauty of the mother reviving with added graces and attraction in the fair form, and expressive countenance of the daughter, it was with feelings of pride, unusual to him, that he remembered his wife had been among the first to cherish and estimate the promise which the youth had given, and which the coming womanhood of Constance was surely about to fulfil.

Moreover, two sons of Sir Robert had fought and died by the side of the Protector, having been schooled in arms under his own eye; and had there been no other motive for his interference, he was not a man to have looked on the dead features of his brave companions, and have felt no interest in the relations who survived them. To the only remaining scion of a brave and honourable race, Cromwell, therefore, had many reasons for extending his protection and his regard. Sir Robert, perhaps, he considered more as an instrument than as a friend; for Cromwell, like every other great statesman, employed friends sometimes as tools, yet tools never as friends—a distinction that rulers in all countries would do well to observe. It is an old and a true saying, "that a place sheweth the man;" few at that time could look upon the Protector, either in a moral or political point of view, without a blending of astonishment and admiration at his sudden elevation and extraordinary power; and more especially, at his amazing influence over all who came within the magic circle of which he was the centre. Burrell of Burrell he regarded as a clever, but a dangerous man; and was not, perhaps, sorry to believe that his union with so true a friend to the Commonwealth as Constance Cecil would convert him from a doubtful adherent, into a confirmed partisan, and gain over to his cause many of the

wavering, but powerful families of Kent and Sussex, with whom he was connected.

Burrell, however, had succeeded in satisfying Cromwell that the proposed union had the full consent and approbation, not only of Sir Robert Cecil, but of his daughter.—The protracted illness of Lady Cecil had much estranged Constance from her friends, and, as the subject was never alluded to in any of the letters that passed between her and her godmother, it was considered that the marriage was not alone one of policy, but to which, if the heart of Constance were not a party, her mind was by no means averse. Of the Protector's views upon these several topics, Burrell was fully aware; and he dreaded the discovery, not only of his own conduct, but of the feelings that existed towards him on the part of his affianced bride; there were other topics that did not so readily occur to the mind of Burrell, but that would have been of themselves sufficiently weighty to have confirmed his worst fears for his own safety,—the Protector's stern love of justice, and his especial loathing of that vice of which the villain had been guilty. Had the Jew, Ben Israel, and the maiden, Constance Cecil, been indifferent persons in his sight, the double treachery of Burrell would have been requited upon his head.

Next to Hugh Dalton, no man possessed so unbounded, and so apparently unaccountable an influence over Sir Robert Cecil as Sir Willmott Burrell: he knew, as we have elsewhere stated, many of his secrets, and shrewdly guessed at others of more weighty import, while, with the ready sagacity of an accomplished knave, he contrived to appear well acquainted with matters of which he was altogether ignorant, but the existence of which he had abundant reasons for suspecting. The enfeebled health and growing infirmities of the Baronet rendered him an easy prey to his wily acquaintance, who, driven to his last resource, resolved upon adopting any course that might save him from destruction, by inducing Sir Robert, not only to sanction, but command an immediate marriage with his daughter.

In commencing the conversation with Burrell, Sir Robert peevishly complained of the annoyance to which he had been subjected in receiving and accommodating the young friend of Major Welmore, although he abstained from the indulgence of feelings similar to those he had exhibited in the presence of his daughter. He then murmured bitterly of sleepless nights—of restless days—of watchings and weariness—of hideous dreams—of the toils, turmoils, and unfaithfulness of the world—the usual theme of those who have done nothing to merit its fidelity; and, as Sir Will-

mott Burrell looked upon him, he marvelled at the change that but a few weeks had wrought in his appearance; his mind seemed so enfeebled, that he deemed it even more altered than his body. He was, moreover, much astonished to find that he dwelt so little upon his recent and most heavy loss; for the attachment between Sir Robert Cecil and his wife had been remarkable at a time when domestic happiness was even the court fashion. But here Burrell was at fault; he knew nothing of the position in which Sir Robert at present stood with regard to Hugh Dalton, and was therefore ignorant of the positive peril by which he was encompassed; a peril so great and so immediate, as to render him in a degree insensible to the affliction under which he had so recently and so painfully laboured. Often, in his dreary night watches, when sleep set no seal upon his aching lids, or when they closed for a little over the strained and worn eyeballs, and then opened in terror at frightful images that haunted his fevered fancy—often at such times had he endeavoured to offer up a thanksgiving, that she was gone from the wrath, the avenging horrors—the approach of which he dreaded a thousand times more than death.

The application that had been made to the Protector for Dalton's pardon, had been treated as he expected; and his only chance of accomplishing the object of the Buccaneer, now rested on the possibility of his gaining over certain persons of the court, to exert their influence with Cromwell in the outlaw's behalf. Sir Robert's personal interest did not extend far, but the influence of his gold did. The Protector could free himself from outward sinners, but he could not rid himself of the more smooth, and, consequently, more dangerous villains, generated by the peculiar forms and habits of the times. To some of these, Sir Robert had secretly offered temptation in every way: the stake was large, the danger certain; for he well knew the inflexibility of Dalton's character, and that he would not fail to perform that upon which he had resolved. It had occurred to him more than once, to consult Burrell on the subject; but a dread of his future son-in-law, for which he could not account, had hitherto prevented his naming to him the Buccaneer's desire to be a legalized commander. His anxiety to carry his point, now, however, overcame his timidity, and he resolved to speak to him on the matter, at the very time the Knight had decided on addressing the Baronet—under equally weighty circumstances—on the subject of his marriage. Unfortunately for Sir Robert Cecil, he was the first to unfold his plan; and thus gave the wily Burrell another and a firmer hold than he had yet possessed. After re-

pinings over his health, and murmurs against mankind, had somewhat lessened that secret and consuming misery, that enveloped him as with a winding-sheet, he inquired if Burrell had lately encountered a man they must both remember—Hugh Dalton—a bold, but reckless fellow, who had played Cavalier, Buccaneer, and a thousand other characters in turn—all characters, in fact, save that of a coward.—Burrell replied in the negative; but confessed he knew the man had been upon the coast; cunningly adding, that since his affections had been so entirely fixed upon Constantia, he had given up every connexion, every idea, that might hereafter draw him from a home where all blessings would be united.

Sir Robert was never insensible to his daughter's praise, but it did not prevent his continuing the subject. He stated that Dalton was a clever, experienced seaman;—that his knowledge of foreign seas and foreign affairs in general, might be made most useful to government, if government would avail itself of such advantages:—that the Buccaneer was a bitter thorn in the side of the Protector, as he had been known to convey malcontents to England, as well as to ship them off;—that his Fire-fly might be termed a meteor of the waters, now here, now there, shining like a blazing star—stealing like a moon-beam—in the Texel, in the Thames, in the Baltic, or the Black sea—as occasion required; every where when mischief was doing, no where when it was to be remedied:—that all this evil might be avoided by giving Dalton a pardon and the command of a Commonwealth ship; that he would accept, indeed he, (Sir Robert) was sure that he desired, such an employment, and that it would be a grievous thing for the state if an arrangement could not be made to purchase his future services and his good conduct at so small a price.

Burrell was astonished, but saw clearly enough that there must be some covert motive for such deep and unaccountable anxiety: he dexterously set forth the various arguments that might be urged by government against a man of Dalton's character; the ill example, the dangerous precedent of one so circumstanced taking his place amongst honourable men, and so forth; mooted a variety of points in order that he might judge of Sir Robert's object by his manner of answering objections.

The Baronet was caught in the toils; he betrayed so much anxiety, so much panting eagerness in the Buccaneer's behalf, as to satisfy Burrell that hardly any thing less than a cause of life and death could create such intense earnestness on such a subject in a person who seemed balancing

between this world and the next. Various surmises and conjectures, which he had heard in former times, strengthened the opinion. Having assured himself upon this point, he ventured upon one of those daring falsehoods that had hitherto been the principal means of his success: he assured the Baronet in the most solemn manner, that he had a secret way, one which he could not explain, but it was a species of promise for service performed, of winning from Cromwell the desired pardon and appointment;—that he had avoided asking such a favour until something particular occurred, something of deep value and importance;—that he was willing to sacrifice his own prospects to oblige his friend; and the only favour he asked in return was one that, though above all price in his estimation, could be easily bestowed by Sir Robert Cecil—the immediate gift of his daughter's hand. He did not wish her feelings to be wounded by a public ceremony so shortly after the loss they had all sustained; nay, he would prefer receiving her from her father in the ruined but beautiful little chapel that belonged to the house: all he requested, all he entreated, was that the marriage should be speedy. Then, with the power of one deeply skilled in deceitfulness, he wound up the whole by tender allusions to the weakness, the precariousness of Sir Robert's health, and the despair he might experience on his death-bed if he expired with the knowledge that his beloved, his only child, had no earthly protector.

Sir Robert remembered his promise to his wife, that he would never urge his daughter's marriage with Burrell; and although he avoided noticing this as an apology to the Knight, yet he firmly stated his dislike to press Constantia on the subject; and earnestly inquired if there were no other way by which he could show his gratitude than by interfering in the matter, at all events, until the year of mourning for Lady Cecil had expired.

Burrell feigned astonishment at this reply: the hand of Mistress Cecil, he said, had long been betrothed to him; he confessed that he did not think Sir Robert would for a moment have hesitated to comply with his most reasonable request: he urged various motives for hastening the union, and finally entreated the Baronet's permission to address his daughter herself on the subject. To this Sir Robert offered no opposition; he was ignorant of the strength of Constantia's feelings with regard to Burrell. She had been affianced to him in her early girlhood, when much too young to have an opinion on the matter; and as the union had never been pressed upon her, she had not been called

upon to state any objections to it. Her poor mother had seen, with the clearness of a mother's love, that the marriage would never tend to her child's happiness: she had observed both characters narrowly, and was perfectly convinced of Burrell's worthlessness. She could not impress this conviction on Sir Robert's mind; but in her last moments she extorted from him the promise that he would never urge the union. This was, as we have seen, all she could obtain; and Sir Robert was content to "keep the word of promise to the ear," without reference to the sense.

Burrell seemed perfectly satisfied with the permission he had obtained, and left Sir Robert in the library, expressing his determination to speak to Mistress Cecil on the subject that evening.

"And he will make her a very affectionate husband," mused Sir Robert, after his departure: "how can he do otherwise! But I do not interfere in it; I know she has no other attachment; and my Constantia's sense of duty will oblige her to love her husband. Oh, yes, she will be happy—happy—happy—" he said, as if the repetition of the word could give birth to the feeling.

It was the clear and balmy twilight; the sun had left the west in glory, and the delicious breeze of evening was mingling among the young leaves of the shrubs and trees; all appeared in contentment and at peace, when the Lady Frances Cromwell and Constance sat together upon a mossy bank, but a few yards distant from the house, yet so overshadowed by venerable trees, that not a turret nor a vestige of the building was to be seen. The spot they had chosen for their resting-place was known as "the Fairy Ring:" it was a circular mound, girdled by evergreens, which, in their turn, were belted by forest-trees, that spread in an opposite direction to the house, into what was called the Ash Copse. The dark green of our winter shrub, the spotted laurustinus, was relieved by the golden tassels of the laburnum, just opening into bloom; the hawthorn contended for beauty and perfume with the delicate blossoms of the purple lilac; while its modest sister, the white, sent forth her pale green leaves, and delicate buds, over a bed of double violets:

"Where all the earth beneath—the heaven above,  
Teem'd with the earliest spring of joyous youth,  
Sunshine, and flowers, and vague, and virgin love."

The quiet and serenity of the evening communicated its tone and character to the buoyant mind of Lady Frances Cromwell.

"I am sober as the twilight, Constance, because I have

been thinking of sober matters. Alas! alas! we have all our twilights:—Youth's twilight is soft and perfumed as that which hovers over us,—tranquil—but it is the tranquillity of hope. The twilight of middle life is, methinks, nearly allied to that of an autumn evening,—doubts hover and come upon us as the falling leaves; the wind whistles like the wailing of departing days; there is but little tranquillity then, because the hope that is left is enough to agitate by its vain dreams, but not to sooth. What shall I say of the twilight of age? I do not like to think of it—its tranquillity appears to me so closely linked with despair.”

“No, Frances, not despair: it is only the moody and abstracted silence of guilt that claims such awful kindred. I think age more beautiful—more hope-giving, than youth; though its beauty is far different, and its hope sublime, instead of joyous. Ask the most prosperous—the most fortunate man in existence—one on whom the eyes of the whole world are turned in admiration and its attendant, envy—ask such a one if he would live over his life again, and he will answer, ‘No!’”

“This speaks badly for the happiness of life,” said Lady Frances.

“I do not think it does,” replied Constantia; “every evil has either a remedy or an anodyne: but, unfortunately, we are more prone to dwell upon evils than upon blessings—yet this should make us less satisfied with earth, as we draw nearer heaven.”

“Constance, are you a philosopher?”

“No; for I am a woman! and what is called philosophy, is sadly at war with both our mental and our bodily endowments. I have heard there are lands in which certain persons think they confer honour upon our sex, by mixing us more up with the bustle and turmoil of the world—methinks they would strangely pervert our natures.”

“I agree with you, Constance: let men have all the public, and women all the private business of life to manage, and my word on’t, the balance of power is with us. Our tongues have enough to do at home, without chattering in high places; and as to our arms! mine could ill wield battle-axe or broadsword. I suppose these people of whom you speak would invent a new sex to look after domestic matters, while we assist in the broil and the battle! We shall lose our influence, depend on’t, the moment we are taken out of our sphere—we shall lose caste as women, and be treated with contempt as men. What I like, Constance, is to have my own dear little way, by my own pretty little manœuvres—behind the bush—thrust another into the



breach, and then, if evil arise, the man gets the blame, while I retreat in safety."

"Then the Lady Frances would take one of the other sex as a shield?"

"Yes, Constance; they would do as well to be shot at as ourselves, you know."

"Ah, Frances, you are no true woman, unless, if there were real danger, you would thrust yourself between it and the life a thousand times more precious than your own. Suppose, for instance, that sudden danger menaced the life of ——"

"Hush, dear Constantia; the idea of such an event is enough. It is easier to sacrifice life when the sacrifice is demanded by affection, than to resign one selfish indulgence."

"Ah! because, in the first case, we gratify ourselves; in the second, others."

"You are a mental chemist, Constance: but here comes the maid called Barbara, with hoods and cardinals, signifying that the dew is falling, though we feel it not."

"I sought you, mistress," said Barbara, "all over the house, for Sir Willmott Burrell advised me that he wished to speak with you in the oak parlour, if it so please you, or in the library; my honoured master was present."

"Did my father, too, want me?"

No, madam; he said he would go to his chamber, for a little, before the evening meal."

The young ladies, followed by Barbara, entered the house, and, as Frances Cromwell pressed Constantia's hand, she felt it clammy and chilling cold; she would have spoken, but, while arranging the necessary words, her friend, with a more than usually dignified deportment, entered the parlour. It was a dark, dim room, the frettings and ornaments of black carved oak.

"Tell Sir Willmott Burrell I await him here," she said to Barbara, while passing the threshold.

Frances Cromwell, over whose mind a feeling of terror was imperceptibly stealing, would have remained, but Constance intimated that she would receive Burrell alone.

## CHAPTER XIII.

—I am sworn brother now  
To grim Necessity; and he and I  
Will keep a league till death.

SHAKESPEARE.

"MY blood seems to curdle in my veins," murmured Constance, as she rubbed the palm of one hand against the back of the other; "my very blood seems to curdle in my veins, and a shadow, as of the Vampire's wings, is over me. But why is this? Is God less present with me here than beneath the heavenly atmosphere I have just now breathed?" And then she uttered a few words of prayer so earnestly, that Burrell had entered the room before she was aware of his presence.

"You are not well," he observed, seating himself in a chair beside that into which she had sunk: "I hope I do not disturb you unpleasantly. You keep watch too anxiously by your father's couch."

"I am better now," she replied; "but that of which you speak, my thought of the living and the dead, although it may have somewhat touched my health, has been my happiest duty."

"Perhaps you would rather hear what I have to say to-morrow," he observed, a momentary feeling of sympathy forcing itself upon his mind, as he noticed her white lip and still whiter cheek.

"I pray you, sir," she replied, proudly, "to proceed; I am as ready now as I can be on the morrow to listen to aught it may be your pleasure to advance. Your observations, if it please you now."

"I have no 'observations' to offer, Mistress Cecil—may I say Constance? for so I used to call you in the early days of our betrothment—though I have much to request. I confess, I have felt hurt and aggrieved at the small show of courtesy you have vouchsafed me; but, as I believe that sorrow and an habitual reserve have wrought this manner, I do not blame, though I regret it deeply. The time, I hope, fair lady, is not far distant when you will ratify my claim to your hand; then the devotedness of my future life—the entireness of my attachment—the depth of my love——"

"Sir Willmott Burrell," interrupted Constantia, "the grass upon my mother's grave is not yet green; and would you talk of love?"

For a moment the Knight was silent.

"Reasons—reasons that I will explain hereafter, make me exceedingly desire that the contract should be immediately fulfilled. Nay, Lady, do not start and shudder," he continued, taking her hand, that hung listlessly and without motion within his grasp; "even should you not love as I do, affection will make you all mine own, within a little time."

"Believe it not, Sir Willmott," said Constantia, at length disengaging her hand; "I can never love you."

Men have been unaccustomed, in all ages, to hear simple truths, of such a description, declared in so simple a manner. Ladies rant and protest that they abhor and abominate—or they weep, and shriek, and call the gentleman odious, or horrid, or some such gentle name; which the said gentleman perfectly understands to mean—any thing he pleases; but Constantia's perfect truth, the plain earnestness of that brief sentence, carried conviction with it; and the handsome Burrell paced three or four times the length of the oak parlour, before he could sufficiently bring his mortified feelings under necessary subjection: he then resumed his seat.

"I think otherwise; a woman can but require devoted affection, constant watchfulness, and tender solicitude. All, all this will be yours. Besides, a daughter of the house of Cecil would not break faith. I could *command* your hand—I only solicit it."

"Sir Willmott, you well know, that when the unhappy contract was entered into, I was of tender age; too young, indeed, to comprehend its nature. Ought you in honour to urge it on me, when I frankly tell you by word of mouth, what my demeanour must have informed you long, long since, that—I can never love you?"

"You have said it once, Lady; and the sentence cannot be pleasant to the ears of your affianced husband. The turmoils of the times, and the service I so largely owed to the Protector, have called me much from home; and though my heart lingered here, I was forced away by duty to the State: surely you would not love me less because it was rigidly performed?"

"You would not wish me your wife," said Constance, in a faltering tone, resolving to make trial of Sir Willmott's generosity, while her strength seemed to rise with her honest purpose—"You would not wish me your wife; for not only do I not love you, but—I love—another."

Now, Sir Willmott Burrell did not start from his chair, nor did he pace up and down the polished floor—he fixed his eyes upon Constantia, as if he would have read within her soul *who* she loved; but the expression gradually and gradually changed, from a deep and perilous curiosity, to one of firm resolve, until, drawing his breath between his set teeth, so strongly as to produce a hissing sound, he said, slowly and deliberately, but in a restrained tone, as if the voice came from the fiend within him—

“I am sorry for it, Constantia Cecil; for it cannot prevent your being mine—mine—and, mine only, and for ever!”

Constantia rose slowly from her seat, and said, in a firm voice, “I did not come here to suffer insult, sir.”

She walked across the room with so dignified a step, that she had nearly reached the door, before Burrell acquired sufficient courage to stay her departure. He laid his hand on her arm as she touched the lock, but she shook it off as coolly, yet as firmly, as the apostle threw from him the viper into the flames at Melita. Burrell, however, had too much at stake tamely to relinquish his purpose. He spoke in a constrained voice, and said—

“I entreat you to remain; if it be not for your own good, it will be for your father’s that you do so.”

The mention of her father’s name at once commanded her attention. She desired Burrell to speak on, without, however, resuming her seat. He paused for so considerable a time that she at length observed:

“I wait, Sir Willmott, and will wait patiently, if it be necessary: but methinks your silence now is as uncourteous as your speech a brief while since.”

“It is because I feel for you, Mistress Cecil,—feel for you acutely, that I thus hesitate. I would spare you the pain I know my words must inflict; and, therefore, once more, calmly, but energetically, implore you to consent to the immediate fulfilment of the contract existing between us.”

“This is trifling, sir. I desire that you suffer me to pass forth. I might have known you had nothing to say that concerned my father; and, as to myself, if you could be mean enough, under such circumstances, to accept my hand, I cannot be base enough to give it.”

“A fine sentence!” exclaimed Burrell, sneeringly. “I make bold to tell you, Lady, I care not so much as you may imagine for your affections, which I know you have sufficient principle to recall, and bestow upon the possessor of that fair hand whoever he may be. Nay, look not so wrath-

ful, for I know *that*, which would make your proud look quail, and the heiress of Cecil rejoice that she could yet become the wife of Sir Willmott Burrell!"

Constantia trembled. She had never before listened to such language, and she felt there must be something appalling in the motive that could give it utterance. Although her hand rested on the massive lock of the door, she had not power to turn the handle. If looks could wither, the Master of Burrell would have shrunk before her gaze; yet he bore her indignant frown with more audacity than he could have believed he possessed.

"If your communication concerns my father, speak, sir; if not"—she paused, and he took up the sentence—

"If not, Constantia casts me off for ever! Yet," he added in a tone of insulting pity, "I would spare your feelings, for you have been a most affectionate child."

"Sir," interrupted Constance, "I hope I am too true a daughter to hear those taunts with patience: your insinuations I despise, and I *defy* you to utter an accusation against him that could summon a tint of crimson to my cheek!"

"But I could speak *that* which would make the red cheek pale, Lady—What think you of—of—of **MURDER!**"

Constantia's eye gleamed for a moment like a meteor, and then it became fixed and faded; her form assumed the rigidity of marble, and at each respiration her lips fell more and more apart. The villain became alarmed, and, taking her hand, would have led her to her seat; but his touch recalled her to herself: she darted from him to the centre of the room, and there, her arm extended, her fine head thrown back, every feature, as it were, bursting with indignation, she looked like a youthful priestess denouncing vengeance on a sinful world.

"If I could curse," she said, "you should feel it heavily; but the evil within you will do its own work, and my soul be saved from sin. Away! away! and you thought to fright me with that horrid sound! My dear, dear father!"

"I declare before Heaven," interrupted Burrell, "*it is to save him that I speak!* The damning proofs of his guilt are within my hold. If you perform the contract, neither tortures nor death shall wring them from me; if you do not—mark me—I will be revenged!"

"Silly, wicked that I was," exclaimed Constance, "not to command you before him instantly, that the desperate lie might be sent back into your throat, and choke you with its venom! Come with me to my father!—Ah, foul coward! you shrink, but you shall not escape!—To my father instantly!"

Burrell would have restrained her, but it was impossible. Finding that he did not move, she was rushing past him, when he arrested her progress for an instant, saying—

"Since you will thus dare the destruction of your only parent, it is fitting you know of whose murder he is accused." He drew nearer to her, so near that she felt his hateful breath upon her cheek, as, like the serpent in the Garden of Eden, he distilled the deadly poison into her ear. A slight convulsion, succeeded by an awful paleness, passed over her countenance; but rallying, she darted on him another look of defiance and scorn, and flew to her father's chamber.

The old man had been sleeping, but awoke as she entered, and, probably refreshed by the short repose he had enjoyed, stretched forward his arms to his daughter with an expression of confiding fondness, which, in the then state of Constantia's feelings, but added to the agony she endured. She could not resist the mute appeal; falling on her knees, she buried her face amid the drapery of his robe. In this posture she continued for a few minutes: her lips uttered no word, but her bosom heaved as if in mortal struggle, and her hard breathings were almost groans. At length, still kneeling, she raised her head, her hands clasped, her swollen but tearless eyes fixed upon the pale, anxious, and alarmed countenance of her parent. He would have spoken, but she raised her finger in token that she entreated silence; a moment afterwards she addressed him in broken and disjointed sentences.

"I can hardly give it utterance—and when I think upon it, I know not why I should intrude so vile a falsehood on your ear, my father; but Burrell seemed so real, so fearfully real in what he said, that I tremble still, and my voice comes heavily to my lips." She paused for breath, and pressed her clasped hands on her bosom.

Sir Robert, imagining that she alluded to her marriage, which he knew Burrell must have been urging upon her, replied—

"My dearest child knows that I have not pressed her union; but Sir Willmott is so anxious—so attached,—and, I must say, that my gray hairs would go peacefully to the grave were I to see her his wife. I am almost inclined to think my Constance capricious and unjust upon this point; but I am sure her own good sense, her regard for her father——"

"Merciful powers!" interrupted Constance, wildly; "and is it really possible that you knew of his proposal? Ay, ay, you might have known *that*, but you could not know the awful, the horrid threat he held out to me, if I did not

comply with his demand—ay, *demand* for an immediate union!”

“It was very imprudent, very useless, in fact,” said the Baronet, peevishly, his mind reverting to the proposals of the Buccaneer, which he believed Burrell had communicated to Constantia; “very absurd to trouble you with the knowledge he possesses of my affairs—that is strange wooing—but good will arise from it, for you will now, knowing the great, the overpowering motive that I have for seeing your union accomplished——”

The Baronet’s sentence remained unfinished, for the look and manner of his daughter terrified him. She had risen from her knees, and stood, her eyelids straining from her glaring eyes, that were fixed upon her father; while her hands were extended, as if to shut out the figure upon which she still gazed.

“It is all madness—moon-struck madness,” she exclaimed, and her arms dropped at either side as she spoke; “some cruel witchery surrounds me; but I will speak and break the spell. Father, you are not a murderer! you did not murder——” and she, too, whispered a name, as if it were one that the breath of heaven should not bear.

The Baronet sprang from his seat, as if a musket-ball had entered his heart.

“’Tis false!” he exclaimed; “there is no blood upon my hand—look at it—look at it! Burrell has no proofs—unless that villain Dalton has betrayed me,” he added, in a lower tone; “but I did not the act, the blood is on *his* head, and not on mine. Constance, my child, the only thing on earth *now* that can love me; do not curse—do not spurn me. I ask not your sacrifice, that I may be saved;—but do not curse me—do not curse your father.”

The haughty Baronet fell, humbled to the dust, at his daughter’s feet, clasping her knees in awful emotion, but daring not to look upon the face of his own child.

It would be as vain to attempt, as it would be impossible to analyze, the feelings of that high-souled woman during moments of such intense misery. She neither spoke nor wept; nor did she assist her father, by any effort, to arise; but, without a sentence or a word, folding her mourning robe around her, she glided like a ghost forth from the chamber. When she returned, her step had lost its elasticity, and her eye its light; she moved as if in a heavy atmosphere, and her father did not dare to look upon her, as she seated herself by the chair he had resumed.

She took his hand, and put it, but did not press it, to her lips: he thought he felt a tear drop upon his burning fin-

gers; but the long hair that fell over her brow, concealed her face. He was the first to break the dreadful and oppressive stillness.

"I would speak with Burrell: there must have been treachery—Of himself, believe me, he knew nothing: but I was so taken by surprise, that I did not consider—"

"Stop, sir, I entreat you," interrupted Constance. "There is now no motive for consideration: I have just seen, and promised to be the wife of Sir Willmott Burrell within this week—and three of its days are already past:—*his* silence, and *your* honour are secured."

The unhappy man was powerless and subdued; he hid his face amid the pillows of the chair, and wept bitterly. Constance walked to the window: the beams of the silver moon dwelt with more than usual brightness on the tops and around the foliage of the trees that encircled the Fairy Ring, where, but an hour before, her footsteps had lingered with her friend. All around seemed buried in the most profound stillness; not the bay of a dog, nor the hum of an insect, disturbed the repose that slept on every plant and flower, and covered the earth as with a garment. Suddenly a nightingale flew past the window, and resting its breast on the bough of an old thorn, poured forth a delicious strain of melody. Constance leaned her throbbing forehead against the cold stained glass, and the tenderness of the wild bird's untaught music penetrated her soul; large tears flowed down her cheeks, and her seared heart was relieved, for a little, of its overwhelming horrors. She then returned to her father's side; and again taking his hand in hers, said, in a calmer voice,

"Father, we have both need of consolation—let us read and pray together."

"It is too late to attempt deceiving you longer, Constance; yet I would fain explain——"

"Not now, father. We will pray."

"And you will be happy; or if not, you will not curse him who has wrought your misery?"

"I have too much need of blessing. Bless, bless you, my father!—Let us now seek consolation where only it is to be found."

"But may I not speak with Burrell? I want to know——"

"Father! I entreat you, peace. It is now useless; the die is cast—for me—for us—in this world—useless all, except the aid that, under any trials, we can ask and receive from Heaven."

"My child, call me your dear father, as you were wont; and let your soft lips press upon my hand as there were



fondness in them—You said you would not curse me, Constantia.”

“Bless, bless you, my *dear* father!” She kissed his hand, and having lighted the chamber lamp, read one of the penitential psalms of the King of Israel, when sin, and the wretchedness that follows sin, became too heavy for him to bear.

“And now let us pray,” said Constantia, conceiving that her father’s mind was more composed; “let us offer up petitions to the Source of all mercy and forgiveness.”

“I cannot pray,” he said; “my lips may move, but my heart is hardened.”

“We will learn of Him who softened the stony rock, that the Children of Promise might taste of the living waters in a strange land.”

And her earnest and beautiful prayer floated to the Almighty’s throne, from that dull and heavy chamber, a record of the faithful and self-sacrificing spirit whose purest earthly temple is a woman’s heart.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Yet spite of all that Nature did  
To make his uncouth form forbid,  
This creature dared to love.

\* \* \*  
But virtue can itself advance  
To what the favourite fools of chance  
By fortune seem design'd.

PARNELL.

"Is your sweet lady out yet, pretty Barbara?" inquired Robin Hays of Barbara Iverk, as he met her in the flower-garden of Cecil Place, when it was nearly mid-day.

"My poor lady is, I am sure, very ill; or, what is still worse, ill at ease," replied the maiden: "She has not been in bed all night, I know, for the couch was undisturbed this morning, so I just came here to gather her some flowers: fresh flowers must always do one good, and I think I never saw so many in bloom so early."

"Barbara, did you ever hear tell of a country they call the East?"

"A country!" repeated Barbara, whose knowledge of geography was somewhat more extensive than that of Robin, although she had not travelled so much; "I believe there are many countries in the East."

"Well, I dare say there may be, Mistress Barbara: you are going to chop scholarship with me; but yet, I suppose, you do not know that they have in that country a new way of making love. It is not new to them, though it be new to us."

"Oh, dear Robin! what is it?"

"Why, suppose they wished you, a young pretty maiden as you are, to understand that I, a small deformed dragon, regarded you, only a little, like the beginning of love, they would—" Robin stooped as he spoke, and plucked a rose-bud that had anticipated summer—"they would give you this bud. But, suppose they wanted you to believe I loved you very much, indeed, they would choose you out a full-blown rose. Barbara, I cannot find a full-blown rose; but I do not love you the less for that."

"Give me the bud, Robin, whether or no; it is the first of the season:—my lady will be delighted with it—if, indeed, any thing can delight her!"

"I will give it you to keep; not to give away, even to your lady. Ah, Barbara! if I had any thing worth giving, you would not refuse it."

"And can any thing be better worth giving, or having,

than sweet flowers?" said the simple girl. "Only it pains me to pull them—they die so soon—and then, every leaf that falls away from them, looks like a reproach!"

"Should you be sorry if I were to die one of these days, Barbara," inquired the Ranger, "like one of those flowers?"

"Sorry! have I ever appeared ungrateful, Robin? When first I came here, you used to be so kind to me:—indeed, you are always kind—only I fear lately you are displeased with me about something or other. You have avoided me—are you angry, Robin?"

"Indeed I am not; nor do I forget how often you have driven away the 'shadows' that used to come over me."

"And do you—I mean, do you esteem me as much as ever?"

Robin looked earnestly into her face, and then taking her hand, gently replied:

"I do esteem you, as you term it, more than ever; but I also love you. When a little helpless thing, I took you from your father's arms: I loved you then as a parent would love a child. When Lady Cecil took you under her care, and I saw you but seldom, my heart leaned towards the daughter of my best friend with a brother's love. And when, as I have just said, the sunlight of your smile and the gentleness of your young girlish voice dispelled much melancholy from my mind, I thought—no matter what. But now the case is altered—you see in me a mere lump, a deformed creature, a being unseemly to look upon, a wretch——!"

"Robin Hays, you wrong yourself," interrupted Barbara; "I do not see you thus, nor think you thus. The raven is not a beautiful bird, nor hath it a sweet voice, yet it was welcomed and beloved of the prophet Elijah."

"So it was, Barbara; but why?—because it was *useful* to him in his hour of need. Think you that, in the time of his triumph and prosperity, he would have taken it to his bosom, as if it had been a dove?"

"I do not see why he should not," she said: "God is so good, that he never takes away one beauty without bestowing another; and the raven's glossy wing might be to some even more beautiful than the purple plumage of the dove: at all events, so excellent a man would not be chained by mere eye-beauty, which, after all, passeth quickly. Though I think it was very uncourteous of Mr. Fleetword to say in my hearing, Robin, that the time would come when Mistress Constance would be as plain-favoured as old Dame Compton, whose countenance looks like the worm-eaten cover of Solomon Grundy's Bible!"

"Ah, Barbara! you are a good girl; but suppose I were as rich as I ought to be before thinking of marrying—and supposing you came to the knowledge of your father, and he

agreed—and supposing Mistress Cecil did not say nay—supposing all this——?”

Robin paused, and Barbara, with her eyes fixed on the ground, commenced pulling to pieces the rose bud he had given her.”

“Supposing all this, Barbara——?”

“Well, Robin?”

“Do you think, **Barbara**, you would then—marry me?”

“I never thought of marriage, seeing that I am too young, and withal, too inexperienced; but there is one thing, Robin——”

“I knew it,” interrupted the Ranger, in one of his sudden bursts of bitterness; “I might easily have known it—Beauty and ugliness!—Fool! fool! to imagine that a girl could look on me without loathing! There—go to your mistress, go to your mistress, and make gay sport of Robin Hays!”

The soft eyes of Barbara filled with tears; she made no reply, but prosecuted her attack on the rose-bud so vigorously, that naught but the stem remained in her fingers.

You need not have torn that rose to bits before my face! Ay, trample on its leaves as you do on my heart!—Why do you not go to your mistress?”

“You are very wayward, Robin; one time smooth, at other times, and without cause, rugged as a path through a thorny common: I can only pray that the Lord may teach you better than to misinterpret my words, and mock a poor girl who never entertained a thought to your disadvantage.”

She could say no more, for the large round tears forced their way down her cheeks, as she turned towards the house with a bowed head and a feeble step. But Robin's mood had again changed.

“I beg your pardon, Barbara: forgive me; and think, that if my mind sometimes takes a crooked turn, it is the fault of my damnable body!”

“Do not swear; it is the profaneness of your words, and, I fear me too truly, of your life also, that hurts me. Oh, Robin! do tell me who my father is, that I may find him, and have some heart to lean upon that will not always cause me tears. My lady is ever sad, and you are ever wayward and uncertain: I am a double orphan; and were it not for the consolation afforded me by better thoughts, should be most miserable.”

“Forgive me, girl, forgive me; but every one alludes to this cursed deformity, and it is ill to bear——” said Robin, walking by her side.

“I never alluded to it, never even thought of it,” replied Barbara, sobbing; “if the voice and the eye be kind, and above all, if the face become familiar, it is one, all one,

whether the features be formed according to beauty or otherwise. I never thought of looking into little Crisp's face, when he licked my hand but now; I only felt that the creature loved me."

"Crisp is no more a beauty than his master," observed Robin, patting the dog, who leaped to the caress: "but you cannot like him as well as black Blanche, or Bright-eye, your mistress's silken favourites, who show their teeth at the poor fellow whenever he approaches the entrance?"

"Bright-eye is a trifle conceited, I grant; but Blanche is like a lamb, only what can she do? Crisp comes gammocking up, wagging his tail, seeming in the best of good humours; poor Blanche receives him kindly, and sometimes walks before him to the buttery; then, all of a sudden, just as she is thinking how very glad she is to meet Crisp—thinking, too, that notwithstanding his shaggy coat and crooked legs, he is a thousand times more to be esteemed and liked than the fine and conceited Bright-eye—at that very time, and just as suddenly as you fly into your passions, Crisp stops, grins, twirls his tail, and will neither return her civility nor accept her invitation. What can poor Blanche do, Robin?"

This statement was made by the pretty Puritan with a mingling of simplicity and shrewdness, for which, to have looked in her innocent face one would scarcely have given her credit. The tears of youth dry as quickly as the dews in summer; and the young heart rebounds from grief as swiftly as the arrow from the bow. Robin looked upon her with doubting, but with strong affection. He knew, though he struggled with hope against the conviction, that Dalton's friendship would hardly induce him to bestow his daughter upon such an unpropitious personage as himself; and he felt assured—or at least believed, in his more gloomy moments, that so it must be—no woman could by any possibility feel affection for him. He was also, at times, under the full assurance that Barbara only laughed at his addresses; and though she had more than once given him all reasonable encouragement, he most industriously placed it to the account of the universality of female coquetry, a theory in which he most conscientiously believed.

Without, therefore, any notice of her little fable, or the visible inference so easily drawn from the comparison between Crisp and himself, he started off from the subject nearest his heart, with an abrupt inquiry as to whether her mistress would be likely to go abroad that evening.

"I dare say she will come out in the twilight," replied Barbara, who had sufficient of the sensitiveness of her sex to feel deeply mortified at Robin's heedlessness of her deli-

cate allusion, adding, "Good day; I cannot stay any longer with you; so give you good day;" and she added in a lower tone, "a more gentle humour when next we meet." Woman's pride impelled her footsteps with extraordinary alacrity; woman's affection, or curiosity, both of which are oftentimes at war with her reason, obliged her to look back as she entered the postern, and then she enjoyed the little triumph of observing that Robin remained on the same spot gazing after her.

"I don't think I said any thing very unkind to him," she thought while passing along the gallery. "I have a great mind to go back and ask him if he wanted to send any message to my lady; I did not give the poor fellow time to speak—I ought not to serve any one so—What would good Mr. Fleetword say, if he knew I spoke so snappishly to any fellow Christian? Keep your cold nose away from my hand, Master Bright-eye; you forget how you behaved to my friend Crisp yesterday."

Just as she arrived at this point of her soliloquy, she stood before a window, overlooking the part of the garden where she had left Robin.—He was no longer there! and the fond heart of little Barbara, at once forgetful of the harshness and waywardness of her early friend, was only aroused from profound reasoning upon her own unworthiness, by a smart tap on the shoulder from the fair hand of Lady Frances Cromwell.

"Pretty Barbara in meditation!" she exclaimed;—"but this is no time to ask upon what or why. What is the meaning of your lady's sudden resolve?"

"What resolve, madam?"

"Why, a resolve to marry Sir Willmott Burrell within this week."

Barbara was panic-struck: she remained silent for a few minutes, and then clasping her hands, implored Lady Frances to do—she knew not what.

"Ah! she will die, my Lady! she will die! for who could live married to such a man? He is indeed a fearful husband for such a one. My Lady, I know she does not love him—she never did—never could. I have heard her say in her sleep——"

"What, good maid?" asked Lady Frances eagerly, and with her usual curiosity. But the habitual integrity of Barbara's mind was awakened: with tears and sobs she replied—

"What I must not, as a true girl, repeat. I crave your pardon, my Lady, but it would ill become me to speak of what is said in sleep: only, dear, dear lady, if you love my dear mistress—if her life be dear to you—prevent, if possible, this marriage."

## CHAPTER XV.

And them beside a ladie faire he saw,  
 Standing alone on foote in foule array;  
 To whom himself he hastily did draw,  
 To weete the cause of so uncomely fray,  
 And to depart them, if so be he may.

SPENSER.

THE Lady Frances Cromwell was not likely to keep secret grief, or any thing else she had the power of disclosing: forthwith she proceeded to assail Constance Cecil with a torrent of exclamations and expostulations, to support which no inconsiderable degree of philosophy was requisite. The intention, however, sanctified the deed, and Constance, for some time, only pressed her hand in reply: at length she said—

“You see me, dearest Frances, at present under much depression:—a dark cloud is over me; but, I entreat you, heed it not. I am about to do what is right, and not even the commands of his Highness, your father, could prevent it, if indeed you were to act upon the hint you have given me, and procure his interference. My fate is sealed, irrevocably sealed! And do you wonder that I tremble at the change I am about to undergo, the awful change from maid to wife? Barbara, good maid, let me see no more of tears, but smiles, as in past times. And now I entreat you both, sweet friends, (for that humble girl has a heart formed by tenderness for what is more exalted—friendship,) leave me. You, my dear Lady Frances, will to-day, for my sake and for his, be as much as possible with my father; he must grieve at this parting—it is but natural;—and you, girl—there, go to your embroidery.”

Barbara looked into her lady's face, seized her hand, and pressed it alternately to her heart and lips.

“I will sit in yonder nook, dear mistress; I will not turn towards you, nor speak, nor breathe—you may fancy me a statue, so silent, so immovable will rest your little Barbara. Blanche and Bright-eye, and even that black wolfhound, remain in the chamber, and why not I? Am I less faithful, or less thoughtful, than a dog? and would you treat me worse? Besides, dear lady, your wedding-clothes! There is not a satin or a silver robe, nor farthingale, nor cardinal—

not a lone ostrich plume, that is not of six fashions past! Good, my lady, if it is to be, you must wed as of a right becomes your high descent. My Lady Frances can well speak of this; and as there is no time to send to London now, her tire-women would help me to arrange the robes necessary upon such occasions."

"Peace, Barbara! I mean to dress as well befits this bridal; so trouble not thyself as to the tiring; but go, my gentle girl, go, go."

"And may I not crouch yonder, where so often I have read to you, and sung the little ballads that you taught me for pastime?"

"Or those that poor Robin taught you? I wish that young man, Barbara, had a more settled way of life; for, despite his awkward form, there is much that is noble and elevated about him. However, make no haste to wed, and, above all, guard well your heart; keep a keen watch over your affections—ay, watch them, and pray, pray fervently, poor girl, that they may go to him who may have your hand."

"They *shall* go," said Barbara, rising to follow Lady Frances, who had abruptly left the chamber to conceal her tears; "I would not marry a king—I mean, madam, a governor—if I did not love him?—Why should I?"

"Why should you, indeed, my kind Barbara! There, go and tell your Master, tell also Sir Willmott, that I have much to do and much to think upon; so that to-day they must excuse my absence. It is an awful thing this marriage,—an unknown, or at least unchartered course to enter on; to virgin minds," she murmured, as her faithful attendant left the room, "at all times full of doubts, ay, even when love is pilot, and the fond soul brim-full of hope. I too, who had such dreams of happiness, of good and holy happiness—the interchange of kindness; the mutual zeal, the tender care—the look, so vigilant and gentle, so full of pure blandishment—the outpouring of thoughts on thoughts—the words, so musical, because so rich with the heart's truth; and so I fancied love and its fulfilment, marriage.—Well knew I of the contract: yet still I dreamed and hoped, yes, slept and dreamed; but to be awakened thus,—to such unutterable horror! Thank God, my mother is in heaven! that is the solitary drop of comfort in my life's poison-bowl —My mother's death a comfort! Alas, alas!"

She covered her face with her hands, and we draw the Grecian painter's veil over the contending feelings it would be impossible adequately to portray.

Sir Willmott Burrell bustled and chafed, and gave orders



to his serving-men, and to those now called tailors; visited the neighbouring gentry, but spoke not of his approaching marriage, which he preferred should take place as silently as might be. Nevertheless he had far too much depending upon the succeeding hours to pass the day either in quiet or composure. He had braved through his interview with the unhappy Sir Robert Cecil, and urged, as an excuse for his conduct, the extremity to which his love was driven by Constantia's decided rejection of his suit; carefully, however, concealing from her unfortunate parent the fact that she loved another.

Sir Robert had sent several messages to his daughter, imploring her to see him, but in vain—she resolutely refused, wisely dreading the result of such an interview.—“This day and to-morrow is all the time,” she said, “I can call my own, until—for me—time has entered upon eternity. All I implore then, is, that I may be alone, the mistress of myself during such brief space.”

When the sun was set, Barbara entered her room with a slight evening meal. Her mistress was sitting, or rather lying on a low couch, opposite a table, upon which stood a small dial, mounted in chased silver, representing a garland of flowers.

“Lay it down, good girl; I cannot taste it at present. I have been watching the minute-hand pace round that dial—Is it, indeed, near seven? It was an ill thought of the foreign craftsman to set Time amid roses; he should have placed it among thorns. Is the evening fine?”

“Fine, but yet sober, my lady; the sun has quite set, and the birds are silent and at roost, except the old blackbird, who whistles late, and the wakeful robin, who sometimes bandies music with the nightingale—Would you like to hear them, madam?”

“Not just now, Barbara: but leave me out the hood.—Did my father again ask for me?”

“Not since, mistress. Mr. Fleetword is with him.”—Barbara left the room.

“I cannot tell why, my lady,” she said earnestly to Lady Frances, whom she met in the vestibule—“I cannot divine the reason, but this bridal has to me the semblance of a funeral. God shield us all from evil! there is a cold death-like chill throughout the house. I heard—(though, my Lady, I do not believe in such superstitions,) but I heard the death-watch tick—tick—ticking, as plain as I hear the old clock now chime seven! And I saw—I was wide awake—yet I saw a thin misty countenance, formed as of the white spray of the salt-sea wave, so sparkling, so shadowy, yet so

clear, come between me and the moonbeams, and raise its hand thus.—Oh, mercy—mercy—mercy!” she shrieked, so as to startle the Lady Frances, and then as hastily exclaimed, “La! madam, to think of the like! if it isn’t that little muddy, nasty Crisp, who has found me out! I will tell you the rest by and by, madam, only I want to turn this little beast into the shrubbery, that he may find his master.”

At another time Lady Frances would have rallied her for accompanying, instead of dismissing Crisp to the garden; but a weight of sorrow seemed also to oppress her. Her usually high spirits were gone, and she made no observation, but retreated to the library.

A few moments after the occurrence of this little incident, Constance was seated on the bank in “the Fairy Ring,” pondering the dread change that had taken place since the previous night.

The evening, as Barbara had expressed it, was fine, but sober. The lilac and the laburnum were in full blossom, but they appeared faded to Constantia’s eyes; so completely are even our senses under the control of circumstances. Sorrow is a sad mystifier, turning the green leaf yellow, and steeping young roses in tears. She had not been long seated, when a step, a separating of the branches, and Walter De Guerre was at her feet. Constance recoiled from what at heart she loved, as it had been a thing she hated; and the look and motion could not have been unnoticed by her lover.

“I have heard, Mistress Cecil—heard all!—that you are about to be married—married to a man you despise—about to sacrifice yourself for some ambitious view—some mad resolve—some, to me, incomprehensible determination!—And I swore to seek you out—to see you before the fatal act, had it been in your own halls; and to tell you that you will never again feel what happiness is——”

“I know it!” interrupted Constance, in a voice whose music was solemn and heavy as her thoughts: “Walter, I know it well. I never shall feel happy, never expect it,—and it would have been but humanity to have spared me this meeting, unwished for as it now is. You, of all creatures in this wide, wide world, I would avoid—Yes, Walter, avoid for ever! Besides,” she continued, with energy, “what do you here! This place—this spot, is no more safe from his intrusion than from yours. If you loved, if you ever loved me, away! And oh, Walter!—if the knowledge—the most true, most sad knowledge, that I am miserable—more miserable than ever you can be—be any sooth-

ing to your spirit, take it with you!—only away, away—put the broad sea between us, now and for ever! If Sir Willmott Burrell slept with his fathers the sleep of a thousand dead, I could never be yours. You seem astonished, and so was I yesternight; but it is true—true—true—so put the broad sea between us quickly, Walter, now, and for ever!”

The Cavalier looked as if he understood her not, or thought her senses wandered: at last he said, “But why ~~did~~ you, with a fortune to command, and a spirit to enjoy whatever is bright, or beautiful, or glorious—why should you fetter your free-born will? There is a cunning mystery about it, Constance;” (Constance shuddered, and hid her face lest its expression should betray something of her secret;) “a mystery I cannot solve: confide it to me, and solemnly I swear, not only never to divulge, but to peril, with my good sword, my heart’s richest and warmest blood, in any cause that can free you from this bad man. Nor do I expect aught of you in return, nor any thing ask, save that you may be happy, with any, any but this—I cannot speak his hated name.”

Constance was too agitated to reply. Under present circumstances, she would have given worlds not to have seen Walter; and having seen him, she knew not what to say, or how to think, or act: the painful struggle she endured, deprived her of the power of utterance.

“It is not for myself I speak, Constantia; though now I need not tell you that the love of boyhood has never been banished from my bosom. The remembrance of the hours we spent together, before a knowledge of the world, before a change in the constitution of our country, shed its malign influence, not over our hearts, but over our destinies,—the remembrance of those hours has been the blessing, the solitary blessing of my exile; it has been the green oasis in the desert of my existence: amid the turmoil of battle it has led me on to victory; amid the dissipation of the royal court, it has preserved me from taint. The remembrance of Constance, like the night-star that cheers the mariner on the wide sea, has kept all holy and hopeful feelings around my heart; telling of home, my early home, and its enjoyments—of Constance, the little affectionate, but high-souled girl—the ———”

“Stop!” interrupted Constance, with an agonized expression; “stop, I conjure you! I know what you were going to say; you were about to repeat that which my mother loved to call me—your wife! She did not mean it in mockery, though it sounds so now, like a knell from the lower earth. But one thing, Walter, one request I have to

make—You pray sometimes!—the time has been when we have prayed together!—when *next* you pray, thank God that *she* is dead!”

“How! thank God that my kind and early friend—that your mother is dead!” repeated the young man, in a voice of astonishment.

“Even so, Walter. You would not see her stretched upon the rack? would not see her exposed to tortures, such as at no very distant period the saints of our own Church endured?—would not see her torn limb from limb by wild horses?”

“Heavens! Constantia, are you mad?” exclaimed Walter, terrified at her excited and distraught manner.

“I am not mad,” she replied, in a changed and subdued tone; “but do not forget (and let it be on your knees) to thank God that my mother is dead; and that the cold clay presses the temples, which, if they were alive, would throb and burn as mine do now.”

She pressed her hands on her brow; while the youth, appalled and astonished, gazed on her in silence.

“It is well thought on,” she said, recovering her self-command much more quickly than he could have imagined possible. “I will give it you; it would be sinful to keep it after that dread to-morrow; even now, what do I with your gift?” She drew forth from her bosom the locket of which we have before spoken, and, looking on it fondly for a moment, thought, though not aloud, “Poor little fragment of the glittering sin that tempts mankind to their destruction! I heeded not your chasing nor your gems; but once (forgive it, God, forgive it!) thought far too much of him who gave it: I should have known better. I will not look on you again, lest you take root within the heart on which you have rested: though it was then in innocence, yet *now* it is a crime—There—” she held it towards him with a trembling hand. While her arm was thus extended, Burrell rushed from behind the covert of a wide-spreading laurel, and with an action at once unmanly and insulting, snatched the trinket from her hand and flung it on the sward.

Magic itself could not have occasioned a greater change in the look, the manner, the entire appearance of the heiress of Cecil. She drew herself up to her full height, and instantly demanded, “How Sir Willmott Burrell *dared* to act thus in her presence?”

The Cavalier drew his sword from its sheath; Burrell was not backward in following the example. He returned Constantia's look of contempt with one of sarcasm—the peculiar glance that becomes so effective from under a half-

closed lid—and then his eye glared like that of the hooded snake, while he replied—

“Methought the lady in her chamber: the destined bride, during the day, keeps to her own apartment; 'tis the soft night that draws her forth to interchange love-pledges and soft sayings.”

“Villain!” exclaimed De Guerre with startling energy, “hold thy blaspheming tongue, nor dare to imagine, much less express, aught of this lady that is not pure as heaven’s own firmament!”

“Oh, my good sir,” said the other, “I know you now! the braggart at my lady Cecil’s funeral—the pall-bearer—the church-yard lounge—the —!”

“Hold, coward!” interrupted the Cavalier, grinding the words between his teeth. “Lady, I entreat you to retire; this is no scene for you:—Nay, but you must!”

“Touch her not!” exclaimed Burrell, the brutality of his vile nature fully awakened at perceiving Walter attempt to take her hand; “Touch her not, though you are doubtless the youth to whom her heart is given.”

“Forbear, sir!” ejaculated Constance; “if you have the spirit of a man, forbear!”

“Oh, then, your passion has not been declared by words—you have spoken by actions!” he retorted with redoubled acrimony.

The reply to this gross insult was made by the point of De Guerre’s sword resting on Burrell’s breast.

“Defend yourself, or die like a vile dog!” thundered the Cavalier, and Sir Willmott was obliged to stand on his defence.

The feelings of the woman overcame those of the heroine, and Constance shrieked for help, when she beheld the combatants fairly engaged in a feud where the shedding of blood appeared inevitable. Her call was answered, but not by words; scarcely more than three or four thrusts had been made and returned, when a stout gentleman, clad in a dark and tight-fitting vest strode nearly between them, and clashed the tough blade of his broad basket-hilted sword upon their more graceful, but less substantial, weapons, so as to strike them to the earth. Thus, without speaking word or farther motion, he cast his eyes first on the one, then on the other, still holding their weapons under, more, however, by the power of his countenance, than of his arm.

“Put up your swords!” he said at length, in a low stern voice,—“put up your swords!” he repeated; then seeing that though Burrell’s rapier had leaped into its rest, De Guerre retained his unsheathed, “put up your sword, sir!”

he said again in a loud tone, that sounded awfully through the still twilight, and then stamped upon the ground with such force and energy, that a young oak, near which he stood, seemed to heave in the yielding earth: "the air is damp, I say, and good steel should be kept from rust. Young men, keep your weapons in their scabbards, until God and your country call them forth, then draw according to the knowledge—according to the faith that is in ye; but a truce to idle brawling."

"I would first know who it is," demanded Walter, still in fierce anger, "who breaks in upon us and commands us thus?"

"Have you so soon forgotten Major Wellmore young man!" replied the stranger in his harshest voice: "I little thought that he of the English graft upon a French stock would have carried such brawling into the house of my ancient friend. Sir Willmott Burrell, I lament that the fear of the Lord is not with you, or you would not use carnal weapons so indiscriminately; go to, and think what the Protector would say, did he find you thus employed."

"But, sir," said De Guerre, no less over-awed by the imperative manner of Major Wellmore, "I, at least, care not for the Protector, nor am I to be baffled of my just revenge by any of his officers."

"Wouldst fight with me, then?" inquired the Major, with much good temper, and placing himself between the opponents.

"If it so please you," replied the youth, abating not a jot of his determination; "when I have made this treacherous and false fellow apologize to the Lady Constance, and afterwards to me for his unproved and unprovoked words."

During the parley, Constance had remained fixed and immoveable; but a new feeling now seemed to animate her, as she approached, and clinging to Major Wellmore's arm for support, spoke in an audible but tremulous voice.

"Walter, I entreat, I command you to let this matter rest. I shall not debase myself by condescending to assert what Sir Willmott Burrell ought and does believe—that I came not here to meet you by any appointment. I say his heart tells him at this moment that such a proceeding would be one of which he knows I am incapable."

"If any reflection has been made upon Mistress Cecil," observed Major Wellmore, "I will be the first to draw steel in her cause. Sir Willmott, explain this matter. Young sir," he continued, noting Walter's ire and impatience, "a soldier's honour is as dear to me as it can be to you."

Burrell felt and appeared exceedingly perplexed; but

with his most insinuating manner, and a tremulous voice, he replied:—

"Mistress Cecil will, I hope, allow for the excess of affection that gave rise to such needless jealousy. On consideration, I perceive at once that she would not, could not, act or think in any way unworthy of herself." He bowed profoundly, as he spoke, to Constantia, who clung still more closely to Major Wellmore's arm, and could hardly forbear uttering the contempt she felt; at every instant her truthful nature urged her to speak all she thought and knew, to set Burrell at defiance, and hold him up to the detestation he merited: but her father, and her father's crime! the dreadful thought sent back the blood that rushed so warmly from her heart in icy coldness to its seat; and the high-souled woman was compelled to receive the apology with a drooping head, and a spirit bowed almost to breaking by intense and increasing anguish.

"And you are satisfied with this!" exclaimed the Cavalier, striding up to her; "you, Constance Cecil, are satisfied with this! But, by Him whose unquenchable stars are now shining in their pure glory over our heads, I am not!—Coward! coward! and liar! in your teeth, Sir William Burrell! as such I will proclaim you all through his majesty's dominions, by word of mouth and deed of sword!"

"Walter, Walter!" exclaimed Constance, clasping her hands.

"I crave your pardon, Lady," said Burrell, without altering his tone; "but do not thus alarm yourself: my sword shall not again be drawn upon a low and confirmed malignant. Sir," turning from his opponent and addressing the stranger, "heard you not how he applied the forbidden title of majesty to the man Charles Stuart; shall I not forthwith arrest him for high treason!—runneth not the act so, formed for the renouncing and disannulling of the pretended title of the late man's progeny!"

"Perish such acts and their devisers!" shouted the Cavalier, losing all prudence in the excitement of the moment.

"Let the Lady retire, while we end this quarrel as becomes men!"

"Heed him not, heed him not, I implore, I entreat you!" exclaimed Constance, sinking to the earth at the feet of Major Wellmore, by whom the hint of Burrell was apparently unnoticed; "the lion takes not advantage of the deer caught in the hunter's toils, and he is distraught, I know he is!"

"I am not distraught, Miss Cecil, though I have suffered enough to make me so: what care I for acts formed by a pack of regicides!"

"Young man," interrupted the old officer with a burst of fierce and strong passion that, like a mountain torrent, carried all before it, "I arrest you in the name of the Commonwealth and its Protector! A night in one of the lone chambers of Cecil Place will cool the bravo-blood that riots in your veins, and teach you prudence, if the Lord denies you grace."

He laid his hand so heavily on De Guerre's shoulder, that his frame quailed beneath its weight, while the point of his sword rested on the peaceful grass. Burrell attempted, at the same instant, to steal the weapon from his hand: the Cavalier grasped it firmly; while Major Wellmore, darting on the false Knight a withering look, emphatically observed, and with a total change of manner—

"I can, methinks, make a good capture without *your* aid, kind sir; although I fully appreciate your zeal *in the cause of the Commonwealth!*" The latter part of the sentence was pronounced with a slow and ironical emphasis; then, turning to De Guerre, he added, "I need not say to you that, being under arrest, your sword remains with me."

De Guerre presented it in silence; for the result of his interview with Constantia had rendered him indifferent to his fate, and, although but an hour before it would have been only with his life that his sword had been relinquished, he now cared not for the loss of either.

Major Wellmore took the weapon, and appeared for a moment to consider whether he should retain it or not: he decided on the former, and in a cold, calm voice commanded his prisoner to move forward. De Guerre pointed to Constantia, who had neither shrieked nor fainted, but stood a mute statue of despair in the clear light of the young spring moon, whose early and resplendent beams fell in a silver shower on her bared and beautiful head.

"I will take care of Mistress Cecil," said the insidious Burrell.

As he spoke, Lady Frances, who, alarmed at the absence of her friend, had come forth to seek her, bounded into the Fairy Ring, and as suddenly screamed, and stood irresolute amid the dread circle. The major immediately spoke:

"Lady Frances, pray conduct your friend: Sir Willmott Burrell, we follow you to the nearest entrance."

"And now," said Constantia, as her head fell on the bosom of her friend, "he is in the lion's den—fully and for ever destroyed!" Nature was exhausted: it was long ere she again spoke.



## CHAPTER XVI.

The doubt of future foes exiles my present joy,  
 And wit me warns to shun such snares  
     As threaten mine annoy;  
 For falsehood now doth flow, and subject faith doth ebb,  
 Which would not be, if Reason ruled, or  
     Wisdom weav'd the web.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

WHILE the headstrong Cavalier was confined in "the strong room" of Cecil Place, he had ample leisure to reflect upon the consequences of his rashness, and to remember the caution he had received from Major Wellmore on the night of their first meeting—to be guarded in his expressions, where danger might arise from a single thoughtless word. He surveyed the apartment with a careless look, as if indifferent whether it were built of paper or of Portland stone, glanced upon the massive bars of the iron-framed windows, and scarcely observed that the walls were bare of tapestry, and that dampness and decay had mottled the plastering into a variety of hues and shades of colour. His lamp burned brightly on the table; the solitary but joyous light seemed out of place; he put it therefore aside, endeavouring to lessen its effect by placing it behind a huge worm-eaten chair. Thus, almost in darkness, with a mind ill at ease, brooding over the events of the day, which had perhaps perilled his life, although life had now become of little value, we leave him to his melancholy and self-reproachful thoughts, and hasten to the chamber of Constance Cecil.

It has already appeared that an early and a close intimacy had subsisted between her and Walter De Guerre; but we must leave it to Time, the great developer, to explain the circumstances under which it originated, as well as those by which it was broken off.

Lady Frances Cromwell had left her friend in what she considered a sound slumber; and sought her dressing-room only to change her garments, so that she might sit with her during the remainder of the night. Barbara, however, had hardly taken the seat the lady had quitted, when her mistress half arose from the bed, and called her by name in so hollow a voice that the poor girl started, as if the sound came from a sepulchre.

"The night is dark, Barbara," she said, "but heed it not; the good and the innocent are ever a pure light unto themselves. Go forth with courage and with faith, even to the Gull's Nest Crag; tell Robin Hays that Walter De Guerre is a prisoner here, and that, unless he be at liberty before sunrise, he may be a dead man, as surely as he is a banned one; for some covert purpose lurks under his arrest. Tarry not, but see that you proceed discreetly, and, above all, secretly. It is a long journey at this hour; the roan pony is in the park, and easily guided,—he will bear you along quickly;—and for security,—for you are timid, Barbara,—take the wolf-hound."

Barbara had long known that a servant's chief duty is obedience, yet she would just then have done errand to any one rather than to Robin Hays; she however replied,

"Please ye, mistress, the roan pony is easy to guide, if you happen to be going the way he likes, and that is, ever from the park to the stable, from the stable to the park; otherwise, like the Israelites of old, he is a stiff-necked beast, whom I would rather eschew than commune with. And the wolf-hound, my lady, behaves so rudely to little Crisp, holding him by the throat in an unseemly fashion, and occasionally despoiling him of a fragment of his ears, toes, or tail, as it pleasures him, that I had rather take black Blanche if you permit me,—she can soon find Crisp or Robin either."

"As you please, Barbara; only silence, and hasten."

"My mistress," thus ran Barbara's thoughts as she wended on her way through the night, "is a wonderful lady; so good, so wise, so rich, yet so unhappy! I wouldn't be a lady for the world!—it is hard fate enough to be a woman, a poor, weak woman, without strength of limb or wisdom of head; and withal, a fond heart, yet afraid and ashamed to show its fondness. If I were my lady, and my lady I, instead of sending my lady to tell Robin Hays to let the poor gentleman out, I'd just go and let him out myself, or send my lady (supposing her the maid Barbara) to let him out, without telling any body about it. And I am sure she loves that poor gentleman; and yet she, wise, good, rich, and wonderful, is just going, in the very teeth of her affections, to marry that black Knight! I am very happy that I'm not a lady, for I'd die, that I would, ten times over, sooner than marry any one I didn't love. It will kill her, I know—I feel it will: yet why does she marry him? And she keeps such deep silence too—Down, pretty Blanche, and do not rouse your sleek ears: your ears, Blanche, are lady's ears, and so ought to hear nothing frightening—and your eyes, Blanche, are lady's eyes, and should never see any thing disagreeable

—What ails thee, doggy? Nay, wag ye'r tail, and do not crouch so; 'tis but the shadow of a cow, I think—How my heart beats!"

The beating of the maiden's heart accelerated her speed, and she ran with hasty and light foot-steps a considerable distance before either dog or girl paused for breath. At length they did pause, and Barbara saw with much satisfaction, that she had left far behind the shadow which caused Blanche and herself so much alarm. She reached the Gull's Nest without any misadventure, and now her object was to draw Robin forth from the hostelry without entering herself. Through a chink in the outer door, (the inner being only closed on particular occasions,) she discovered Robin and his mother, and one or two others—strangers they might be, or neighbours—at all events she did not know them. Presently Crisp stretched his awkward length from out its usual coil, and trotted to the door, slowly wagging his apology for tail, as if perfectly conscious of the honour of Blanche's visit. Miss Blanche, in her turn, laid her nose on the ground and snorted a salutation that was replied to by a somewhat similar token from master Crisp. Robin, who was the very imbodyment of vigilance, knew at once there was something or some one without, acquainted and on friendly terms with his dog, and he quietly arose and opened the door without making any observation to his companions. He was, indeed, astonished at perceiving Barbara, who put her finger on her lip to enjoin silence. He immediately led her to the back of the house, where none of the casual visitors could see them, and she communicated her lady's message quickly but distinctly. She would have enlarged upon the danger, and expatiated on the interest she took in the cause of the Cavalier, had Robin permitted her, but she saw he was too much distressed at the magnitude of the information to heed the details, however interesting they might have been at any other time.

"But I don't understand it," at length murmured Robin; "I can't see it; how could he possibly suffer Sir Willmott Burrell to place him in confinement!"

"It was not he at all," replied Barbara; "it was Major Wellmore, and he is at the Place now."

"Death and the devil!" exclaimed Robin, at the same instant pressing his back against the wall beside which he stood: it instantly gave way, and Barbara was alone—alone in that wild and most dreary-looking place.

She summoned Blanche, but Blanche was far away over the cliffs, exploring, under Crisp's guidance, the nooks and intricacies of the hills and hollows. She would have called

still louder, but her quick eye discerned not now a shadowy figure, but Sir Willmott Burrell himself, within a distance of two or three hundred yards, and approaching towards her. She was concealed from his sight by a projection of the cliff; but this she never considered, alive only to the danger his appearance at once suggested. She had noted the spot where Robin had disappeared, and, urged by terror, she flung herself against the same portion of the wall, with such success, that it gave way before her, replacing itself so suddenly that, in an instant, the light of the bright stars in the blue heavens was shut out, and she stood in total darkness, within the recess that had so mysteriously opened to receive her.

When she became a little collected, she distinctly heard the sound of voices at no great distance, and groping about in the direction they pointed out, discovered a narrow flight of stairs, which she immediately descended, imagining that she was following the course which Robin had pursued. Her progress was soon arrested by a door, which she attempted to shake, but in vain; she leaned against it, however, or rather sank down upon the steps, worn out by fatigue of body and anxiety of mind. She could not have lain there a moment, when the door opened, and Robin literally sprang over her in his haste to reascend. She started from her position on perceiving before her the well-remembered figure of the Buccaneer, who was about to mount also, evidently with as much eagerness, though with less activity, than Robin Hays.

The sight of a stranger at their most secret entrance, even though that stranger was a woman, sent Hugh Dalton's hand to the pommel of his sword, but it was as quickly stayed by Robin's cry of, "It is Barbara."

The Buccaneer had just time to catch the fainting form of his daughter in his arms, and the wild and reckless seaman was so overpowered by the unexpected meeting, that he thought not of inquiring how she had obtained admittance. We have observed that women in the inferior ranks of society continue much briefer time in hysterics, swoons, and such-like, than the high-born and well educated, who naturally, or rather we should say artfully, know how to make the most of all matters of the kind. Barbara rapidly revived, and as rapidly urged Robin to heed her message, and to take her away, informing him in the same breath, that she had pushed against that portion of the wall where he had so strangely disappeared, because she had seen Sir Willmott Burrell approaching the spot with determined speed.

"Listen at the secret door," exclaimed the Buccaneer. "When he cannot find you above, he will seek you at the only entrance he knows of: I need not say, answer not the sign."

"Robin, Robin!" ejaculated Barbara, "take me, oh! take me with you!—You are not, surely, going to leave me in this horrid place, and with a stranger too!"

Poor Dalton! what painful and powerful emotions convulsed his heart and features!—"a stranger!"—a stranger, indeed, to his own child!

Robin quitted the place without replying to her entreaty, and when the Buccaneer spoke, it was in that low and broken voice which tells of the soul's agony.

"Why call me stranger!" he said, approaching and tenderly taking her hand; "you have seen me before."

"Yes, good sir, the night previously to my dear lady's death—it is an ill omen to see strangers for the first time where there is death. I thank you, sir, I will not sit. May I not go after Robin?"

"Then you prefer Robin to me?"

"So please ye, sir: I have known Robin a long, long time, and he knows my father: perhaps you too may know him, sir; you look of the sea, and I am sure my father is a sailor. Do you know my father?"

The gentle girl, forgetting her natural timidity under the influence of a stronger principle, seized the hand of the Buccaneer, and gazed into his face with so earnest and so beseeching a look, that if Robin had not returned on the instant, the Skipper would have betrayed the secret he was so anxious to preserve until (to use his own expression) "he was a free man, able to look his own child in the face."

"He is at the entrance, sure enough," said Robin; "but it will occupy him longer to climb the rocks than it did to descend them; we can take the hollow path, and be far on the road to Cecil Place before he arrives at the summit."

"But what can we do with her?—She must not long breathe the air of this polluted nest," argued Dalton, all the father overflowing at his heart; "and if we delay, Burrell may see her: if so, all is over."

"I can creep along the earth like a mocking lapwing," she replied: "Let me but out of this place, I can hide in some of the cliff-holes—any where out of this, and," she whispered Robin, "away—above all things away—from that fearful man."

"To Cecil Place at once then, Captain; the delay of half an hour may doom him to—I know not what. I will place Barbara in a nook of the old tower, where nothing

comes but bats and mice; and, as it overlooks the paths, she can see from it the road that Burrell takes, and so avoid him when returning."

Dalton looked at Barbara but for a moment, then suddenly clasping her with rude energy to his bosom, he darted up the stairs, holding open the door at the top, so that he might see her forth in safety.

The terrified girl passed tremblingly before him, and wondered not a little at the strong interest the wild seaman manifested towards her. Only one way of accounting for it occurred to her simple mind,—that he had known her father;—the idea was strengthened, when she heard him murmur, "Thank God! she breathes once more the uncontaminated air of heaven!" He strode a few hasty steps forward, then turned back, and said emphatically to Robin—

"Place her in safety, as you hope for salvation!"

"And am I to stay by myself in this horrid place, Robin?" inquired Barbara, as he seated her in the window of a portion of the old tower, from whence a large extent of country was visible.

"Fear nothing," he replied; "I must away: only do not leave this until you see—which you can easily do by the light of the bright moon—Sir Willmott Burrell take his departure."

"And will that rude old sailor help the young Knight from his confinement?"

"He will, he will."

"One word more, Robin, and then my blessing be with you! Did he know my father?"

"He did."

"But one syllable more: Did he love him?"

"So truly, that he loves you as if you were his own child."

"Then," thought Barbara, in the fulness of her innocence, "I am happy, for no one is loved, even by the wicked, who is not good."

Her clear eye observed that Robin took the same path as the Buccaneer; though, had she not known them, she could hardly have recognised their figures, because of some strange and novel manner in which they walked, or of some disguise they must have suddenly assumed. They had scarcely faded from her sight, when she discovered the tall person of Burrell standing at no great distance on the brow of the cliff, and apparently surveying the adjacent landscape. He rapidly approached the Gull's Nest; and soon after she heard the shrill voice of Mother Hays, protesting over and over again, that "Robin had been there not twenty, not fif-

teen—no, not ten minutes past;—that she had searched every where, and that he was no where to be found;—that she had not seen Hugh Dalton for a long, long time, and that, to the best of her belief, he had not touched the shore for many a day;—that the men within were good men, honest men—one in particular, who would be happy to serve him, as he seemed so earnest to see Robin—Jack, true Jack Roupall, a tried, trusty man:—could he be of any service, as that ne'er-do-good, Robin, was out of the way ever and always when he was wanted? To be sure, she could not even give a guess at anything his honour might want; but, perhaps, Jack might do instead of Robin." It occurred to Burrell at the moment, that Roupall might serve his purpose even better than Robin Hays, for he was both a strong and a desperate man; and he bade the old woman send him forth, telling her at the same time, and in a significant tone, that he was well acquainted with the talents and character of her guest.

The fragment of the tower in which Barbara was perched was a small projecting turret-room, standing on the top of a buttress, and had been doubtless used in the early ages as a species of sentry-box, from which a soldier could command a view of the country and the coast. It was with feelings of extreme terror that she perceived Burrell and Roupall close beneath her, standing so as to be concealed from the observation of any passenger who might go to or from the dwelling. She drew her dark cloak over her head and face, leaving only an opening to peep through, anxious to avoid, by every means in her power, the hazard of a discovery. She could gather, from the conversation between the two, that Burrell was describing to Roupall something that he must do, and offering him a large reward for its completion; she listened eagerly and heard them frequently speak of Cecil Place and Walter De Guerre. Her attention, however, was soon drawn away by the appearance of a third person, unseen by the others, creeping round a projecting corner, like a tiger about to spring upon its prey, and then crouching close to the earth. The form was that of a slight youth, clad in a tight-fitting doublet and vest, and, it would seem, armed only with a dagger, which, however, he carried unsheathed, and so openly that the moon-beams danced upon its polished point as lightning on a diamond, whenever he changed its position in his hand (which he did more than once.) He crept on so silently that neither were at all aware of his approach, but continued talking and bargaining as before. Barbara felt that danger was at hand; and yet, had she the inclination, she had not the power to

speak, but sat breathlessly and tremblingly awaiting the result. Suddenly, but still silently, as though the figure were a phantom, and the dagger air-drawn, the boy rose from the ground, and held the weapon as if irresolute whether to strike or not. The manner in which he stood fully convinced Barbara Iverk that Burrell was the object of some intended attack—she tried to shriek, but the voice choked in her throat. As rapidly as this mysterious being had risen from, he sank into his former crawling attitude, and disappeared. All this occurred in much less time than has been occupied in relating it, and the poor maiden almost thought she had been deceived by some supernatural appearance. She was soon aroused from her painful state of voiceless terror by the words of Burrell, who now spoke more loudly than at first.

"I will give him his liberty this very night, which, of course, under the circumstances I have mentioned, he cannot fail to consider a most deep obligation—an act of disinterested generosity. I will give it him secretly, of course, and you meet him on his exit. As we go along, I will settle the where—and then—the matter is easily concluded."

"Very easily for you, doubtless," retorted Roupall; "you had ever the way, master, of keeping your neck out of the noose. How much of the coin did you say?"

Barbara did not hear the reply.

"Why it's only one more. Is he young?"

"Yes."

"I don't like young customers. 'It's a charity to put the old out of the way; for, be they ever so well off, they must be sick and weary of the world—But the young—I don't like it, master."

"Pshaw! it's only saving him in time from that which gives old men trouble; and life can go but once: besides, I will not stand for the matter of a few broad pieces. I care not if I make the sum half as much more, provided it be done safely."

"Will you give me your note of hand to it?"

"Do you take me for a fool?—or did you ever know me to break my word?"

"I never took ye for the first, Sir Willmott, and, as to the other, we've had no business between us lately. Half as much more, you said?"

"Half as much more."

"Well, it is but one, and then,—ah! ah! ah! I'll reform and turn gentleman. No, d—n it, I hate gentlemen, they're so unprincipled; but you must double—double or quits."

"Jack Roupall, you are an unconscionable scoundrel."



"By the lady-moon, then, there be a pair of us, as the devil said to his horns."

Burrell muttered some reply that Barbara did not hear, but again the grating voice of Roupall ascended.

"Double or quits;—Why, ye needn't be so touchy about a little word of familiarity—such fellowship makes all men equal."

"Well then, double, if so it must be; only remember, Roupall, there is some difference between the employer and the employed," was the Knight's answer. And the high-born and the low-born ruffian walked away together; and the bright beams of the holy moon and the unsullied stars fell upon them as gently, as if they had been good and faithful ministers of the Almighty's will.

The two leading features of Barbara Iverk's character, were fidelity and affection; all her feelings and actions were but various modifications of these great principles—in every sense of the word, she was simple-minded. After the men had departed for some time, still she could hardly bring herself to understand or believe the nature or extent of the crime they meditated.

It was surely a most singular manifestation of God's providence, she thought, which placed her there, that she might overhear, and it might be prevent the great wickedness of those evil men. She descended from the window with haste, but with caution also, for the stones crumbled from beneath her feet as she moved along. She had scarcely set her foot on the grass turf, when the two dogs were at her side, whining and fawning with delight at again meeting with their friend and mistress. Barbara crossed the wild country, and gained the park-wall without encountering any danger. When there, she paused breathlessly under the foliage of an old oak, and would have given worlds to see and speak to her friend Robin. Amid the deepness of night, and among the foliage of trees, she thought she discerned the figure of a person creeping under the boughs—now in shadow, and now casting his own shadow upon what had shadowed him. This appearance terrified her so exceedingly that she did not gain courage to proceed, until she saw that he turned into a distant path; she then stole slowly along under the shelter of the wall, and when she came to a small gate which opened into the park, within view of the mansion, she pushed through it, and just gained the lawn, when the sound of a pistol, and a flash through the darkness, terrified her so much, that she fell, faint and exhausted, on the sward.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A mystery! ay, good, my masters.

—there's mystery

In a moonbeam—in a gnat's wing—

In the formation of an atom—

An atom! it may be a world—a peopled world—

Canst prove that it is not a world? Go to,

We are all fools."

OLD PLAY.

HUGH DALTON and Robin Hays had hastily proceeded to Cecil Place, discoursing, as they went along, upon the probable consequences of their friend's arrest. Bitterly did the Buccaneer comment upon the rashness and impetuosity so frequently evinced by De Guerre.

"It is perfectly useless," he said, "attempting to curb these boy heroes; the rushing blood must have its way until arrested by age, not wisdom; the hot head must be cooled by the ice of time, and not till then will the arguments or experience of others be regarded as they merit."

"It is Burrell I fear," retorted Robin; "there is but one hope in that quarter—he cannot know him."

"But he may hear."

"How?"

"I don't know; only I have ever observed that the keenness of such men exceeds that of better and wiser ones."

"Ay, ay," said Robin; "but we must sharpen our wits in due proportion: though, at present, I suspect it is arms we shall want. I know the room well, and there is a lot of creeping ivy and such plants under the window; the greatest difficulty will be with the iron stanchions."

"The greatest difficulty, methinks, will be to escape from the arrester; and you seem to think nothing of the danger I run in trusting myself within the grasp of such a man."

"The Cavalier is worth all risks."

"I know it, Robin. Did I ever shrink from peril in such a cause?"

"Faith, no!" replied the other with his usual chuckle; "if God had willed you to be born a snail, you would have crept out of your house, so careless are you in all things."

"Do you think there is aught of danger for Barbara?" said the Buccaneer, his manner clearly showing that, if he did not care for himself, there was something he did care for.

"If she is timid as a hare," replied Robin; "she is, as a hare, heedful and light-footed: no fear for her. How your heart clings to her, Captain!"

"So it does; and yet some strange shadow comes over me when I think of her—as if I knew she would despise, perhaps hate me—she has been brought up in such strict principles; still, I would not have her less right-minded."

He paused, and they proceeded silently on their way, Dalton pondering on the best method of procuring De Guerre's liberty, and then thinking of his sweet and gentle child.

Nature may lie buried or be stifled for a time—an apathetic temperament will seek to smother, a harsh one to bind, a strong one to subdue it—but it overcomes them all; and, though a man's speech may run according to his learning, and his deeds according to his habits, yet Nature thinks and speaks within him, often in direct opposition to the words that fall from his lips, and the actions in which he may be engaged. Thus it was with the Buccaneer; despite the fearful course his outlawed life had taken, the remembrance of his child would arise to his imagination, shaded by sorrow, or sunned by happiness, according to his mood of mind,—but always as his child,—the being upon whom his very existence seemed to hang.

"There is little light from his window," said Robin, as they came within view of the house; "let us over the fencing—Hush!" he continued, elevating his hand so as to command the attention of his companion, at the same time bending his ear to the earth. Dalton listened, but, it would seem, heard no sound, for he exclaimed hastily—

"Hush! me no hush!—you are ever fancying something or other out of the way."

Robin repeated the signal.

"What mummary!" said the Buccaneer; "I hear nothing, and see nothing."

Robin laid himself on the ground, while the impatient and irritated seaman fumed and moved about, a curse whizzing from between his teeth, as ever and anon he looked at Robin, and from Robin to the house.

"If you must have employment," said the Ranger, at last, in a low tone, "see to your arms. Are your pistols loaded muzzle high?—are your weapons sharp?—Hush!"

The Buccaneer knew that these hints were not given in wantonness, and calmly examined his fire-arms.

"The tramp of horses!" continued Robin, "and of heavy ones too; but they are going from, not coming towards us. Ah! heard you not that?"

He raised himself from the ground, and the neigh of a horse was borne to them on the blast. They both stood in breathless silence, the Buccaneer with his hand suspended over, but not touching his sword-handle—Robin, with open mouth and extended hands, as if the very movement of his limbs could destroy the quietness around, or impede the sound they watched for. Again the neigh was repeated, but more faintly, and evidently from a greater distance.

"Safe from one, at least," said Robin, jumping in ecstasy, but yet speaking in a subdued voice. "I would know the neigh of that black steed amid a thousand; its tone is like that of a trumpet, mightiest among its kind. I feel as if the weight of a hundred stone were off my heart,—don't you?"

Dalton replied not, for he was fearlessly striding towards the house, not, as before, sneaking among the bushes.

"Let us to the window, Captain," said Robin.

"Not I," he replied. "What care I for any of them now? I shall demand Walter from Sir Robert."

"You are foolhardy. What can be done quietly, ought to be done quietly. If we cannot succeed so, why dare Sir Robert, and Sir Willmott too?"

"I believe you are right, though I hate sailing on a lee-shore. The open, open sea for my money! Hark ye! Cecil dare not refuse me this.

"Or any thing else, I suspect! though I know not why," replied Robin, as he commenced climbing by the creeping plants to the prison window, beneath which they now stood. "How delighted he will be to see my ugly face, poor fellow!"

Robin continued muttering broken sentences all the while he ascended, having previously arranged with the Buccaneer that he was to remain below. "Ah! firm footing this old ivy. There, now we are up!—Master Walter! Master Walter!—He sleeps behind that screen, I warrant me, little thinking of his faithful friends. So, so! the rust hath done its duty. Strong room! strong walls they mean; but what signify strong walls without strong windows!—Good! There goes another, and another—better still!—And now—"

He entered the chamber,—passed to the front of the screen, opened the large cupboard, cast his eyes upon the untrimmed lamp, and then perceived that the door was

slightly ajar; but no vestige remained of Walter De Guerre, except his cloak, that was flung over a settle. His first movement was to close the door, push a large chair against it, and then call softly to the Buccaneer to ascend.

"He is gone!" exclaimed Robin with a trembling voice, as Dalton entered the room.

"Gone!" repeated the Skipper: "then is there treachery. My brave boy, that I loved as my own son! By heavens! I'll rouse the house! Had it not been for my accursed plots, he would not have come over. I'll have him delivered up to me! Did Sir Robert plan his destruction as skilfully as he plotted that of——"

Hugh was prevented from finishing his sentence by the sudden entrance of Sir Willmott Burrell, who appeared in the room they could not tell how, as the chair was still against the door, and there were no visible means of admission except by the window.

Dalton and the Knight eyed each other with evident astonishment, but the fiery Buccaneer was the first to speak.

"And you are here, Sir Willmott! and for no good, or your face would not be so smooth, or your lip so smiling. Where, sir—where, I say—is your prisoner?"

"My prisoner, good Captain! I had no prisoner."

"Death and d——n! Sir Willmott, dare not to trifle with me. Where is the young man? where is Walter De Guerre? You know; you must know. Why come you here silently, secretly? Answer me, Sir Willmott Burrell. Where is the young man?"

"Captain Dalton," replied Sir Willmott, "although your anxiety about this malignant convinces me that you are not the man my friendship thought you, yet I confess that I came here for the express purpose of forwarding his escape. Doubt me if you will; but see, I am unarmed, and here is the secret key for unfastening the grating, which, I suppose, you, and my quondam servant, have so unceremoniously removed."

Dalton looked at him, and then at the key, which he took from his hand and scrupulously examined.

"Sir Willmott Burrell," he said, after a few moments' deliberation, "Why did you this? You are not one to do an act of good,—whatever you might of evil,—for its own sake."

"Why?" repeated Burrell.

"Ay, why? Your motive, sir,—your motive?"

"Motive? What motive had you for bringing over this fly-away Cavalier, and, when I questioned you, denying any knowledge of the youth?"

"Sir Willmott, my question was first asked, and must be first answered."

"Then, sir," replied Burrell, drawing himself up, "let it be enough that such was my pleasure. Now, Captain, your answer to my question."

"Your answer will save me the trouble," replied the Buccaneer, with as much height, if not as much dignity of manner. "Apply it in the same way."

"I must call you to account for this, as well as other matters; but now think that, considering who sleeps under this roof, it would be only wise to withdraw. It is somewhat upon my mind, despite your well-feigned surprise, that you have spirited away this fellow—if so——"

"Stuff, stuff!" interrupted the Buccaneer; "there has been here a stronger spirit at work than either yours or mine; and, as to calling me to account, you always know where I am to be found."

"I sought you there to-night on this very errand," replied the wily Sir Willmott, "but you were absent."

"Still, I repeat, you know where to find me. And now for my parting words. Observe, I dread no meeting with any; you have more reason to tremble than I have, if all were known. But now—see that no harm happen to the Cavalier who, but an hour since, occupied this chamber; for, as surely as you now live! if but a hair of his head fall to the earth, I will hunt you to your own destruction! Never tell me that you have no power, no control over him or his destiny. All I say is,—see to it. It would be better that you had been drowned, like a blind kitten, at your birth, than that any harm should happen to Walter De—De—De——" Dalton looked confused, then, recovering himself, he glanced a fierce look at Sir Willmott, and commenced his descent from the window, muttering, "Devil! I forgot his name; couldn't he have taken an English one? D—n all foreigners?" With this John-Bullish exclamation, which seems so natural to the natives of "Old England," the skipper reached the ground. Nor was Robin long in following his example; he cared not to tarry Sir Willmott's questioning, and touched the earth sooner than his friend, inasmuch as he sprang down, when midway, with his usual agility.

They had not gone three steps on their path when Sir Willmott's voice arrested their progress.

"Hist, Dalton! hist!—here is the youth's cloak,—put it on, good Dalton, the night is raw; here it goes. Well caught, Robin; make the Captain put it on; you can return it to the Cavalier when you see him, which you doubtless

will, and soon—I entreat you put it on. The path by the lake leads straight to the Gull's Nest. I wish, Robin, you could tarry here till morning,—I shall want you on business of importance."

Robin shook his head in denial. Dalton threw the cloak over his shoulder, and almost mechanically took the path that Burrell had pointed out. Sir Willmott immediately withdrew from the window. They had not gone more than a hundred yards, when Robin looked back towards the house, and, by the light of the moon, caught a glimpse of the Master of Burrell, as if intent on their movements. He at the time took no notice of this to the Buccaneer, but they no sooner arrived at a spot where the branches of the trees overshadowed their path, when Robin plucked the cloak from the shoulders of his companion.

"Well, Robin!" exclaimed the Skipper in astonishment.

"It is not well," replied the manikin; "it cannot be well when the devil turns nurse-tender. He would not have been so careful of your health, if he thought your life would be of long duration. And why point out this path?—it is not the shortest; and if it were, what cares he for our legs? Wanting me to stay at the Place too—it's all ill. Besides, I saw him watching us from the window: why should he watch us? was it love, think ye? Go to, Master Dalton, you are not the man you were: let us strike into another path; I will be one concentrated mass of ears and eyes, and do you keep your arms in readiness."

"You are right, Robin; you are right—right in one thing, at all events," replied Dalton, leaning his arm against a tree, and pressing his forehead with his hand; "I am not, indeed, the man I was! The lion spirit is yet within me; but, Robin, that spirit which never quailed to mortal authority, is become weak and yielding as a young girl's heart, to the still, but appalling voice of my own conscience. After every effort there is a reaction:—the blood!—the blood, shed through my instrumentality, and often by my own hand, rises before me, like a crimson cloud, and shuts out all that is pure and holy from my sight. It used not to be thus! My passions—my whirlwind passions, that carried me forward for so many years, are dead, or dying. It takes time to wind me up to a brave action:—my joints are stiffening, and crack within their sockets, when called upon to do their duty. The very good I would, I cannot! This Walter, whom I love next to my own Barbara—to find him in the lion's net! That Jewish girl I sought, merely to save her from yon hell-hound's grasp!—she unconsciously eludes my search; in some shape or other she will be sacrificed. I am

sick—sick of villains and villany! With wealth enough to purchase lands, broader and fairer than these we now tread upon, I would thank God, night and day upon my bended knees, to make me as one of the poor hinds, who has not wherewith to purchase a morning meal—or as a savage—a wild untamed savage, who hunts the woods for food!”

“You’d do foolishly then, Captain; under favour, very foolishly,” replied Robin, yielding to the Buccaneer’s humour, and yet seeking to calm it away. “Know ye not that every rose has its own thorns, and every bosom its own stings? Besides,” he continued, faintly, “the wealth you speak of will richly dower Barbara; make her a match for a gentleman, or mayhap a knight!”

“Did you say a gentleman? No, no, I will never marry her to one who would take her as so much ballast to her gold, and scorn her as the Rover’s daughter.”

“But you would scorn a poor man for her?”

“Blessed poverty!” exclaimed the sailor; “how would I hug it to my heart—make it joint partner with my child in my affections, if it would only bring a fair unspotted name in exchange for the gold it might take away. Blessed poverty!”

It would appear that Robin was too much occupied by his own feelings to be on the alert as usual; for Dalton was the first to perceive a man stealing along by the side of, but not on, the path they had quitted; he pointed him out to Robin’s attention. In an instant the little Ranger commenced reconnoitring; and came back without delay, to tell the Captain that it was no other than Jack Roupall.

“Jack Roupall!” repeated Dalton, returning instantly to the path they had quitted, saying aloud at the same time, “Why, Jack, what sends you on this tack?”

Whether from some sudden tremor or astonishment, it cannot be ascertained, nor could the ruffian himself account for it, he discharged a pistol, evidently without aim, and Robin as instantly struck it from his hand.

It was this report that had so terrified Barbara. But there was another ear upon which it struck—in the solitude of that wild room in Cecil Place. It sent the blood rushing to his evil brain;—he clasped his hands in exultation; for the death-sound was to him the voice of security; and he prayed—(that such wretches are allowed to pray!)—that the bullet was at that moment wading in the life-stream of the Buccaneer.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

Brother of Fear, more gaily clad,  
 The merrier fool o' th' two, yet quite as mad;  
 Sire of Repentance! child of fond Desire!  
 That blow'st the chymic's and the lover's fire,  
 Leading them still insensibly on  
 By the strange witchcraft of "anon."

COWLEY AGAINST HOPE.

To account for Walter De Guerre's sudden departure, we must revert to the time when, silent and solitary, he shaded the glare of the night-lamp from his eyes, and threw himself along the black oak form to meditate and mourn over events that appeared to him, at least, now beyond his own control.

Whatever others may think as to our bringing on our own misfortunes, we hardly ever agree in the hard task of self-condemnation—a task of peculiar difficulty to the young and the ardent. They may even be inwardly dissatisfied with themselves, yet they care not to express it openly, lest they may be thought little of;—a timidity natural in youth, and arising, not unfrequently, from diffidence in its own powers. Age may improve the understanding, but it chills the affections; and though the young are ever fitter to invent than to judge, and abler for execution than for counsel; yet, on the other hand, they are happily free from that knowledge of the world which first intoxicates, and then, too frequently, leaves its votaries with enfeebled heads and palsied hands. Had not Walter been schooled in adversity, he would have been as haughty and as unyielding a Cavalier as ever drew sword in the cause of the unhappy Stuarts; but his boyhood had been passed amid privations, and they had done the work of wisdom. As in books, so it is in life, we profit more by the afflictions of the righteous Job, than by the felicities of the luxurious Solomon. The only break of summer sunshine in his short but most varied career, was the time he had spent with Constance Cecil; nor had he in the least exaggerated his feelings in saying that "the memory of the days passed in her society had been the soother and brightener of his existence." He sorrowed as much at the idea that she was sacrificing herself from some mysterious cause,

as at the termination his affection was likely to suffer. That so high-souled a being was about to make such a sacrifice from worldly motives, was, he knew, impossible; and among the bitterest of his regrets was the one, that she did not consider him worthy of her confidence.

"I could give her up, almost cheerfully," he would repeat to himself, "if her happiness depended on it; but I cannot support the idea that she thinks me undeserving her esteem." As to his arrest, he cared but little for it: at another time it would have chafed and perplexed him in no small degree; but Constance—the beloved Constance—the playmate of his childhood—the vision of his boyhood—the reality of his maturer years, was alone in his mind. Often did he wish he had not seen her in her womanly beauty; that he had not spent a day beneath the roof where he was now a prisoner; that she had been any thing but worthy of the passionate affection he endeavoured vainly to recall. Had she been less perfect, he thought he could have been less devoted; and yet he would not have her other than she was. But for such a one to be the victim of Sir Willmott Burrell—a traitor! a coward,—the thought was insupportable. After many contending ideas, he came to the resolution that, cost what it would, he would put the case in all its bearings to Major Wellmore—another mystery he vainly sought to unravel, but who had evidently powerful interest with the family at Cecil Place. True, he was a partisan of the Protector; but nevertheless there were fine manly feelings about his heart, and it was, moreover, clear that he was by no means well inclined towards Sir Willmott Burrell. With this resolution on his mind, bodily fatigue overcame even his anxieties, and he fell into a deep slumber.

He had slept but for a short time, when he was suddenly awakened by the pressure of a hand upon his shoulder; he looked up, and by the dim light of the fading lamp saw it was Major Wellmore who disturbed his repose. He started at once from his couch; but the officer seated himself upon an opposite chair, placed his steeple-crowned and weather-beaten hat on the floor, and resting his elbows on his knees, and his chin between the palms of his hands, fixed his keen eyes upon the young Cavalier, who, when perfectly awake, perceived that his visitor was dressed and armed as usual.

"Is it morning, sir?" inquired De Guerre, anxious to break the silence.

"No, sir," was the concise reply.

"The whole house sleeps," resumed Walter; "why then are you up and dressed? and why am I disturbed?"

"You are mistaken, young man. Know you a pretty, demure, waiting-gentlewoman, called Barbara?"

"Mistress Cecil's attendant?"

"The same:—she has but now left the house, to communicate, I suppose, with your respectable friends at the Gull's Nest, and devise means for your escape."

"If so, I am sure I know nothing of the foolish plan."

"I believe you. There is another who slumbers not."

"What, Constantia!—is she ill?" inquired the Cavalier, with an earnestness that caused something of a smile to visit the firm-set lip of the hardy soldier.

"No; I know nothing of young ladies' slumbers; I dare say she and her loquacious friend, Lady Frances, have talked themselves to sleep long since."

"Lady Frances, I dare say, has," persisted Walter; "light o' lip, light o' sleep."

"I spoke of neither of the women," said the Major, sternly; "I allude to Sir Willmott Burrell,—he sleeps not."

"By my troth I am glad of it," exclaimed the Cavalier, "right glad am I that slumber seals not the craven's lids. Would that I were by his side, with my good steel, and where there could be no interruption; the sun should never rise upon his bridal morn."

"Ah! you would show your regard for Mistress Cecil, I presume, by destroying the man she has chosen to be her husband: such is the malignant's love!"

"Love, sir! I have not spoken of love.—But could Constantia Cecil love a dastard like this Burrell?—Listen!—I thought to tell you,—yet, when I look on you, I cannot—there is that about you which seems at war with tenderness. Age sits upon your brow as if it were enthroned on Wisdom—the wisdom learned in a most troubled land—the wisdom that takes suspicion as its corner-stone; yet once, mayhap, blood, warm and gentle too, flowed in those very veins that time hath wrought to sinews; and then, sir,—then you looked on love and youth with other eyes—Was it not so?"

"It may have been," replied the soldier:—"speak on."

"In my early youth, nay in very childhood, I was the playmate of her who is now ripened into glorious womanhood. I will not tell you why or wherefore—but 'tis a strange story—my destiny led me to distant but far less happy scenes:—my heart panted to be near her once again: yet it was all in vain—for, in truth, I was cast upon the waters—left—"

"Like the infant Moses, doubtless," interrupted the Major; adding, "But found you no Pharaoh's daughter to succour and take pity? Methought there were many to be—"

come nursing fathers and mothers to the spawn, the off-sets of Monarchy."

"Sir!" exclaimed the Cavalier with emotion, "why this needless insult? You told me to proceed; and now—"

"I tell you to desist. What care I to hear of the love you bear the woman Cecil?—She is the betrothed of another man; and were she not, think you I could wish her wedded to one holding principles such as yours? Have not her gallant brothers, boys fostered, nurtured in freedom, soared to taste the liberty of Heaven?—have they not yielded up their breath, their life-blood in the holy cause? The saplings were destroyed, although the Lord's arm was outstretched, and mighty to save!—And think ye I would see her, who is part and parcel of such glorious flesh, wedded to one who yearns for the outpourings of slaughter, and the coming again of a race of locusts upon this now free land?"

"If Lady Constance would have broken the unjust contract," replied Walter, reasoning for once with something like coolness, "I should not have thought of asking your opinion, or consulting your wishes, Major Wellmore."

"And yet, had you been different, had the Lord given unto you to discern the right, I could, I might, I would say, have had sufficient influence to order it otherwise,—that is, if her affections be not placed on Burrell; for I hold it as a fleshly and most carnal act to bestow the hand in marriage, where the heart goeth not with it."

"If Mistress Cecil were asked," said Walter, "she would not; I am sure, deny that the man is held by her in utter abhorrence."

"I have heard of this," replied the veteran, "but look upon the information most doubtfully. Constantia Cecil is a truth-loving and a God-fearing woman, and I deem her to be one who would die sooner than plight a false faith: it would be difficult to find a motive strong enough to destroy her sense of religion, or the rectitude springing therefrom."

"Ask yourself, acquainted as you are with both natures," persisted De Guerre, "if one like Mistress Cecil could love such as Sir Willmott Burrell?"

"I grant the apparent impossibility of the case; but mark ye, it is easier to believe in the existence of impossibilities, paradoxical as such a phrase may sound, than to fathom the mind of a woman, when she pleases to make secret what is passing within her, or when she has taken some great charge into her heart. Howbeit, whether she love Sir Willmott or not, she is little likely to love one who seeks, like you, the ruin of his country."

"The ruin of my country!" repeated the Cavalier.

"Even so: dissatisfied with present things in England, you cannot deny that you hunger and thirst after a Restoration, as the souls of the Israelites thirsted after the luxuries of Egypt, and would have endured a second bondage to have tasted of them again. Young man, you should know that those who bring war into their country, care little for its prosperity."

"I shall not deny that I desire a change in this afflicted kingdom," he replied; "but as to bringing war again into England, those who first drew the sword should think of that."

Major Wellmore knit his brows, and looked fixedly at the Cavalier. Then, after a few moments' pause, recommenced the conversation, without, however, withdrawing his eyes from their scrutiny.

"We will again talk of your own individual affairs, good youth; for we are not likely to agree upon the political bearing of this land. You believe that Mistress Constance is but little affected towards the man she is about to marry?"

"Affected towards him!" repeated Walter, kindling at the idea. "Unless affected by deep hatred, nothing else affects her, as far as he is concerned. I could swear to the truth of that conviction, on the Saviour's Cross—on the hilt of my own sword, were it necessary."

"Which it is not," observed the Major. "But how reconcile you that with the high opinion you entertain of the lady?"

"I cannot reconcile it. If I could, I should feel almost at peace with her and with myself. It is mystery all—except that the accursed bridal will be the stepping-stone to her grave! That is no mystery."

"You would prevent this marriage?"

"Yes, truly, were my heart's blood to rush forth in so doing; if," he added sorrowfully, "its prevention could be indeed accomplished;—but it is too late now."

"It is not too late," said the old officer, "if you will listen calmly, and learn that there is no necessity for such profaneness as you have used. Oaths and exclamations cannot destroy facts, any more than sunbeams can dissolve iron: so, avoid, I pray you, idle or wicked words, and listen. You would prevent this marriage?"

"Most undoubtedly, were it possible; but I know, I feel it is too late:—the damming——"

"Sir!" interrupted the Roundhead warmly, "I have just cautioned you against the use of profane words; yet you stuff them down my throat. I am crammed, sir, with your blasphemy."

"Is this a time to stand on words?" inquired De Guerre,

with great quietude of manner. "We have different modes of expression, but they tend towards the same end,—at least so you would have me believe. We have both in view the happiness of Mistress Cecil."

"You speak truly," replied the other: "and having so good an object to attain, it is meet that we use the worthiest means to achieve it; a lily should not be trained and nourished by a sullied hand."

The youth bowed, though, when he afterwards thought upon the simile, he pondered on the strangeness that one like Wellmore should seek metaphors from the flowers of the field. But Nature and its feelings are rooted in the heart of the warrior and the statesman, as well as in that of the tenderest maid who tends the sheep or milks the lowing kine; the difference alone is, that many things besides find place within the worldling's bosom, while her breast is one sweet and gentle storehouse for God and for his works.

"You must prevent this marriage?" reiterated the soldier. Walter again bowed; but the gesture intimated impatience.

"You are opposed to the present system, and would have it changed?" he continued.

"Where is the use of this repetition?" said De Guerre. "You know all this, and from myself: imprudent I have been, but not deceitful."

"And you would see the Protector of these realms brought to the —. Can you not finish the sentence?"

"I would, and I would not, see him brought to the block," replied Walter, with manly frankness. "I come of a race who loved the Stuarts; in some degree I have been cherished by them. Yet, though a most desperate —"

"Out with it, sir," said the Major hastily, filling up the pause in De Guerre's sentence. "Out with it! I am accustomed to hear him abused."

"—A most desperate villain; still there is a boldness—a native majesty—a — Dalton has so often praised his bravery."

"Dalton! Did Dalton speak well of Cromwell?" interrupted Wellmore.

"Yes, well, greatly of him, as an intrepid soldier, as a being to wonder at. Yet he has no right to the high place whereon he sits; and —"

"You would pull him down?"

"I confess it."

"The time will come when I will discuss the merits of this case with you," said Wellmore, after a pause, "albeit I like not discussion; 'tis not a soldier's weapon; but you are worthy of the effort. I like you, though you are mine

enemy, and that is more than I can say of many friends. You know nothing of what the country suffered. You know nothing of the sacrifices that man has made for its good. Were not Cromwell and Ireton accused by their own party of favouring the man Stuart? Was not Cromwell obliged to stay to Ashburnham and Berkeley, who came to him, as the Parliament thought, on all occasions, and about all things, 'If I am an honest man I have said enough of the sincerity of my intentions; and if I am not, nothing is enough.' Was he not overpowered by the people's clamours?—They would have a king no longer; the name, sir, the very name was as a foul stench in their nostrils; the time had arrived when the lawgiver was to depart from Judah. Could he, or could any man—ought he, or ought any man to fight against the Lord, or the Lord's people?" He spoke thus far with strength and energy, then suddenly pausing, he added, "But, as I said before, there is time enough for this. As to yourself, young man, if your love towards the lady be firm and true, if your wishes for her welfare be pure and holy, if you are a true patriot,—behold! I will tell you—for this came I hither—say that you will be one of the standing army of England! say but the word,—to enjoy rank, opportunities of distinction, honour, and Constance Cecil as your bride!"

He paused as for reply, but the Cavalier made none; he only leaned his head against his hand, as if communing with himself.

"She will be miserable," persisted the crafty soldier; "inevitable misery will be her lot; and you can prevent it if you please." He fixed his eyes upon Walter, as if to read the secrets of his soul; then, unsatisfied with the scrutiny, continued—"Burrell, as you have observed, cannot make her happy: so much beauty, so much worth!—you cannot hesitate—your single arm could not accomplish the end you aim at."

"Peace, tempter, peace!" exclaimed the Cavalier, bursting as fearlessly and as splendidly from his repose as the sun from behind a dark but yet silent thunder-cloud. "You might have conquered," he continued in a more subdued tone, "had not the knowledge of the love of Constantia Cecil saved me, as it has often done. She would only loathe the man who could change his principles from any motive but conviction. Enough, sir! enough, sir! I know not who you really are; but this I know, I would no more see her despoiled of her rectitude than of her chastity. Had she been here, she would have acted as I have done—No, she would have acted better, for she would not have hesitated."

The veteran remained silent for a few moments after this

burst of strong and noble feeling; he then slowly and deliberately put on his hat, drew the thick buff gloves over his muscular hands, resumed the cloak that had fallen from his shoulder, and pointed to the door.

"Do you mean," inquired Walter, "that I am at liberty to depart?"

"You are to go with me; but you are still to consider yourself under arrest."

"To go—whither?"

"You go with me. You might have been at liberty; but now—you go with me. And, one word more. Walk gently if you value life, or what may be dearer than life. I am not one to have my will disputed. You will learn as much; but now, I say, walk gently. I wish not to disturb this giddy household: they prate, like others of their sort, of people's doings, and 'tis not meet to grant them opportunity."

"I am a man of desperate fortunes now," thought the young Cavalier, as he followed his mysterious guide through some winding and to him unknown passages of the mansion—"a man of desperate fortunes, and care not where I go."

As they passed through the shrubbery, he saw distinctly the rays of a lamp stream from Constantia's window. The light fell on a clump of early roses that grew upon a flat and ancient wall, the vestige of some old moat or turret. As they passed nearly at its base, Walter sprang up and pulled one, then shrouded it within his bosom, as he thought, unobserved by his stern warder; but it was not so—the veteran noted the little act, and, noting, understood it. There was a time when he could feel and not define; that time was past, and succeeded by the present, when he could define, but not feel. In this instance, however, his memory did him good service; and the remembrance of what his own course had been, came upon him with all the freshness of renewed boyhood, so that he could have pressed his youthful and ardent antagonist to his bosom. This sunbeam of the past was not to continue, for he opened a wicket-gate leading into the park, and blew one note, not loud, but clear, upon a whistle. In an instant, as if the grass had produced men, Walter found himself in the midst of mounted soldiers. He looked around him in amazement, and even touched the nearest horse, to be certain that it was not a dream! There they stood, the moonbeams, broken by the overshadowing trees, coming down in dappled spots upon the chargers and their iron-looking riders: carved centaurs could not be more immovable. True, Walter had been absorbed; yet was all this real! There was for him, too, a stout steed, which he was twice desired to take ere he obeyed.



## CHAPTER XIX.

Jointure, portion, gold, estate.  
 Houses, household-stuff, or land,  
 (The low conveniences of fate.)  
 Are Greek no lovers understand.

COWLEY

"VERILY the Lord scattereth!" was the exclamation of the Reverend Jonas Fleetword, as he passed from one to another of the apartments of Cecil Place, seeking for some one with whom to hold converse, yet finding none. Sir Willmott Burrell was abroad, even at an hour so early; Lady Frances Cromwell closeted with Constantia; Sir Robert Cecil particularly engaged; even Barbara Iverk was not to be found,—and the poor preacher had but little chance of either a breakfast or a gossip, or, as he termed it, "a commune." In the course of his wanderings, however, he at length encountered Solomon Grundy, puffing and courtesying under the weight of a huge pasty he was conveying, by a prodigious effort, to the battery.

"Ah, Solomon my friend," said Fleetword, "of a truth it is a pleasant thing to see thee."

"You mean that you behold something pleasant with me," retorted the cook; "and of a verity, your reverence——"

"You must not call me reverence; it is one of the designations of the beast;—my voice is raised against it—against the horned beast."

"This was a horned beast once," again replied Solomon, observing that the preacher's eye was fixed upon the pasty; "nature may be changed by cookery. It hath lost all the sinful qualities that you talk about, and hath become most savoury and nourishing food: doth it resemble the change that, you say, takes place in the spirit?"

"We must not so mingle profane and sacred things," murmured Fleetword, placing his fore-finger upon the tempting dish, with a longing and eager look; for he had walked far and was fasting. "Is this one of the baked meats thou art preparing for the coming festival?"

"What festival?" inquired the cook, surlily: "I know of no festival. Of a surety, have I laboured in my calling, to furnish forth something worthy of this house; yet, from

what I hear, there will be few at this wedding to profit by my skill. I little thought to see our dear young lady so wedded."

"Solomon, feasting is foolishness; it savoureth of the mammon of unrighteousness: yet was Nimrod a mighty hunter before the Lord, and Isaac loved seethed kid. Couldst thou extract a morsel of meat from that compound, for of a truth I am an hungered?"

"What! spoil my garnishing?" exclaimed Grundy: "look at the frosting of that horn, and the device, the two doves—see'st thou not the doves?"

"Yea; but methinks thou mightest take away a portion, without injury to the goodly fabric.—Behold!" and the Reverend Jonas lifted, with the cook's long knife, (which he snatched in unbecoming haste from the girdle,) the paste of the edge of the gigantic pie, and stole a weighty slice of the venison from beneath.

"Ah, ah!" grinned Solomon, evidently pleased at the distinction bestowed upon his compost. "Is it not passing good! But you taste not of the gravy—the gravy!"

"It is unseemly to dispose one's heart towards such luxuries; though the saints stand in need of food no less than the young ravens,—only it should be in moderation."

The preacher gulped down a ladleful of the pottage, and gasped for another, unmindful of his own precept, while the gravy lingered on his lips.

"Such as that would soon make you another man," said Solomon, glancing at Fleetword's slender and spindle shanks; "there's nourishment in it."

"We all stand in need of regeneration, Solomon, and should desire improvement, even as the hart panteth for the water-brooks; be it improvement of body, or improvement of mind. There was a wise King of Israel of thy name."

"What! Grundy, sir? the Grundys were of Lancashire," said the gratified compounder of kitchen-stuff.

"Not Grundy; heard ye ever in Scripture of a name like that? retorted the preacher. "It was Solomon the wise."

"I remember him now; he had a many wives. But you can call to mind, sir, when I only wanted to put away old Joan, and marry Phoebe Graceful, you, sir, wouldn't let me. But them old Christians had a deal more liberty."

"Peace, fool! exclaimed Fleetword, somewhat in anger. "Solomon was a Jew."

"A Jew! repeated the cook, "I wonder at your holy reverence to think of such wickedness; surely your reverence does not want me to be like a Jew?"

"Solomon, thou art a fool—in bone, in flesh, in marrow,

and in spirit. Have I not told thee of the ungodliness of these thoughts?" replied the preacher as he finished his last morsel. "But, unless I answer thee according to thine own foolishness, I cannot make thee understand. Get me a flagon of double-dub."

"With a toast in it?" demanded Grundy, silyly peering out at the corner of his eye.

"Thou canst comprehend *that*," replied Fleetword; "truly—truly, the creature comforts have absorbed thy whole stock of ideas. Thou art like a sponge, Solomon—a mere fungus. Thou may'st put in the toast. And hark ye! if ye see Barbara, tell her I would speak with her; not here—not here—that would be unseemly—but in the oak parlour, or the library, I care not which."

"Now, do I wish for Robin Hays," muttered the shrewd yet ignorant cook; "for he would expoundiate, which signifies, make clear—why a parson must not meet a maid in the buttery.—But he is not a parson—Then he is a man—But not only a man, he must be something else, methinks. But why not Barbara go to the buttery? Just in time, here comes Robin; so I'll e'en ask him.—Give you good day, my Kentish man: it was a pity you were not here last night, as you so love a fray. The handsome youth, who had been staying on a visit, was cooped up, because he and Sir Willmott fought about my Lady Constance. And then the Major—he has been here two or three times, and they call him Wellmore—although worthy Jabez Tippet, the boatman, swears—no, not swears—declares, that no such person ever crosses the ferry:—Yet is he dumb as a tortoise as to who does. Well, the Major and the young gentleman went off in a flash of lightning, or something of the sort; for Sir Willmott and my master could not find him. And I asked Barbara about it! but marry, she knows nothing, and therefore says nothing——"

"Which proves her different from the other sex; for they sometimes know next to nothing, yet say a great deal," retorted Robin, sarcastically.

"Humph!" replied Grundy; "you look chuffish this morning, Master Robin: have you got any thing ready for the bridal?"

"Don't worry me," exclaimed Robin; "what care I for bridals, or bridles either, unless I could fix one in your mouth? Where's Barbara?"

"The very thing I want to know; for that holy man, the Preacher Fleetword, having communed with the pasty, would fain commune with the maid—not in the buttery though. And now, methinks, I had a question to put to you—Why is it unseemly for a man to——" The cook

held up his hand in his usual oratorical style, so that it stood out like a substantial fan before his face, and touching the second finger of his left with the forefinger of his right, was proceeding with his inquiry, when he perceived that Robin had vanished! "Robin! Robin Hays! oh! thou heedless, and most faithless person! thou Jacky Lantern!" he exclaimed, and then followed as he thought, the passage that Robin had taken. It happened, however, to be the opposite one, so that he received not the required information.

Robin sought Barbara in every place where it was likely she might be found, but without success; being unable to enter the more private apartments of the dwelling, he applied to one of the damsels of Lady Frances' suite.

"Oh, you seek Mistress Barbara, do you, young man?" and she cast her eyes over Robin's mishappen figure with an expression of contempt that could not be mistaken; then passed her finger along the braid of hair that bounded the border of a plain cap, made of the richest lace; pulled down her stomacher, and apparently waited for the Ranger's reply. Robin reddened to the eyes, for he could but impatiently brook such personal scrutiny; and his annoyance increased when he saw that his embarrassment was noticed by his courtly companion.

"We do not call her mistress here," he said at length; "but I pray you tell me where she is: I mean the Lady Constantia's attendant, little Barbara Iverk."

"I know who you mean perfectly well," replied the pert woman in authority; "we of the court are not thick-headed, as you of the country may be, so I will explain fully to your ——" she tittered rudely and loudly; but Robin's pride was nettled, and he heeded it not; "to your——but I wouldn't laugh, if I could help it. Barbara wished to know how the attendants were dressed when my Lady Mary was married so very lately to my Lord Fauconberg; and, as we of the court always carry our wardrobes with us, and the simple girl being my size,—she hath a marvellously fine person for one country-bred,—I dressed her as was fitting in my robes: a white striped silk petticoat, and a white body made of foreign taffeta, the sleeves looped up with white pearls, no cap upon her head, but a satin hood just edged with Paris lace. 'Od's Gemini! young man, if you had but seen her. Then all of a sudden her lady wanted her to get some flowers, and she had only time to throw on her cardinal and run for them!"

"Then she is in the garden?"

"By the Fairy Ring, I take it; for there the best flowers grow."

Robin did not tarry to thank the court damsel for her information, but bounded right away to the garden, cursing the rude laugh that again insulted him.

As he drew near the ring, he heard a faint shriek. His quick ear knew at once that it came from the lips of Barbara; and bursting through the trees, he was in an instant by her side.

It will take many words to describe what had passed in a single moment.

Barbara, dressed as Lady Frances' woman had described, was on her knees before a slight, sallow youth, who held an unsheathed dagger in one hand, and spoke in a language that was a mixture of some foreign tongue and most imperfect English. Barbara, pale and trembling, evidently did not understand a word the other said, yet knelt with hands and face upturned, while the boy brandished the weapon, as if in the act of striking. As his dark eye flashed upon his victim, it caught sight of the Ranger, who rushed from the thicket to her side. With a piercing cry, the boy sprang away into an almost impenetrable underwood, that skirted the portion of the Fairy Ring most distant from the house. Barbara no sooner saw Robin than she attempted to rise; but she was unequal to any farther exertion, and sank fainting on the grass.

When she recovered, she found herself in the same spot, with her head on Robin's shoulder. Her spirits were relieved by a burst of tears, and, withdrawing her head, she wept plentifully in her hands, heedless of the drops that crept through her small fingers, and fell abundantly on the white silk petticoat the waiting-maid so highly prized.—Robin had always thought her beautiful, but he had never avowed it to himself so decidedly as now. Her long, luxuriant hair, no longer twisted and flattened under her Puritan cap, flowed over the simple, but to Robin's eyes, superb dress in which she was arrayed; the drapery rather added to than lessened the pure and holy look which is the soul and essence of virginal loveliness; and he never felt his own worthlessness so much, as while thus contemplating Barbara at the very moment when she was a thousand times dearer to him than ever.

She was the first to speak, as passing her hand over her eyes, then looking up between their long silken lashes, smiling as a young child at the danger that was past, and retaining only the remembrance of it, because it brought to her gentle and affectionate mind another proof of Robin's attachment and protecting care, she stretched out her hand, all gemmed as it was, and sobbed, even while smiling

"Dear, good Robin! he would have killed me. Are you

quite sure he is gone! Come near me, Robin; he will not come back while you are here. I am sure he mistook me for some one else, for—" she spoke in a low tone, "I saw him once before, Robin Hays," still lower, "at the Gull's Nest Crag, only last night."

"I knew the little rascal was after no good; and to pretend dumbness too!"

"Dumbness!" repeated Barbara, "Did he pretend to be dumb?—and do you know him?"

"I do know that he, in some degree, stole his passage over in—But no matter; I'll clip his wings, and blunt his dagger, I warrant me; he shall play no more such pranks. To frighten *you*, my Barbara!—what could be the motive? serious injury he could not intend."

"Ah, Robin!" said Barbara, shuddering, "you did not see his eyes as I did, or you would not say so; such eyes! Ah! I should have been bitterly frightened had I not prayed this morning. Dear Robin, why do you not pray?"

Robin looked at her and sighed; "Could you understand nothing of what he said?" inquired he.

"I heard him repeat the name of Burrell and that of my dear Lady, two or three times; but what he meant I cannot fathom. Oh, but he had a wild and terrible look! Why should he seek to harm me?"

"Why, indeed!" echoed Robin; "it must be seen into, and that immediately. I'll speak anon of it to Dalton."

"To Dalton!" in her turn echoed the girl; "Oh, that fearful man——"

"There is no one under the sun who has more love for you than he has—than Hugh Dalton."

"I am sure he knew my father."

"He did indeed: but question me no farther now, sweet Barbara; make your mind quite easy, the outrage shall not be repeated. Perhaps the boy is crazed. Let's think no more of it, my gentle girl. I must bid you farewell."

"Farewell, Robin! Why—wherefore? Tell me, where are you going? When do you return? How long do you stay?"

"Now, if I were a king, and one that woman could look upon and love, I would give the half, the whole of my kingdom, to be sure she feels as earnestly as she speaks," thought Robin. She perceived the coldness of his look, and continued, though with a changed expression,

"What ails you? Have I angered you? Will you be thus wayward with your poor Barbara?"

"My Barbara!" he repeated bitterly, and he touched the Frenchified hood that hung over her shoulders: "my Barbara!" would these trappings become any one that belonged

to such a thing as me? Rare contrasts we should be! Methinks such bravery does ill adorn a simple Puritan; one professing such principles should don a plainer robe. Gems, too, upon your sleeves!—is not a bright, but modest eye, a far more precious jewel? If it can be outshone by any other ornament, it is worth nothing."

He turned from her as he spoke, and tears again gathered in her eyes.

"Robin," she said in a broken voice, "it was Mistress Alice put them on, to show me the proper tiring for a bower-maiden at a great festival—such as my Lady's ought to be.—But I will take them off—all off, if you like them not."

"Nor sigh for them again."

"Sigh for such as these?" she repeated, looking on her finery with disdain. "No, Robin, young as I am, I have learned better things. The linnet would look ill tricked out in parrot's feathers. Not but I think the bravery becoming, though, perhaps, not to me;—surely no, if you like it not! But whither are you going? only tell me that.—Alas! that dark and blackbrowed boy has so confounded me, that I know not what I say. The last night's fray has sore distressed me too:—you know it all."

"Hush, Barbara! 'Tis of that I would speak; it is that which takes me from you, but only for a few days—it cannot be very long;—yet I must find out where he is. I know the hands his wilfulness has thrown him into, but I think they will save him from worse treachery. Nevertheless, I must to London, and, if I cannot find him there, I must elsewhere seek him out. If any ask for me, you will remain silent; and, dear girl, if chance should throw you in Dalton's way, (it is likely he may be here in a few days, perhaps before I return,) speak him kindly and gently; bear with him, as you have borne with me."

"That is impossible," interrupted Barbara, "for there is no reason why I should do so. He was never kind to me."

"But the time is coming when he will be kind. And now adieu, Barbara. I desired much to remain, but I cannot. I imagined I might be useful to Mistress Constance, but I could not; it rests not with me."

"I am very sorry you are going, Robin; for now, when I think of it, my heart is heavy within my bosom; I know not why it should be so. You are sure you can prevent that wild bad boy from frightening me again?"

"Quite sure. I'll lock him up within the Crag till my return."

"Thank you, Robin; but he will be kindly treated."

"To be sure he will."

"Thank you again;—but still the weight is here—*here*,

on my heart. Do you think it would be very wrong to wear this dress at my lady's bridal?"

Robin smiled at the earnestness and simplicity that characterized this child of nature.

"Oh, no; but if you love such, I can get you far finer garments."

"Can you indeed?" she exclaimed joyfully:—"But no," she added, in a sadder voice, "no bravery for me after this bridal. I dreamed a dream last night. Do you believe in dreams, Robin? Listen: I thought we were all standing at an altar in the ruined Chapel."

"Who? All?" inquired the Ranger, eagerly.

"My lady and that man, and—" she paused.

"Who?" again inquired Robin.

"Why, you: 'twas but a dream, you know," she added, blushing to the temples. Then, as the colour faded from her calm face, even more quickly than it came, she continued, "And we all looked so beautiful! and I thought you so like the Cavalier Walter, and I felt so peaceful and happy. But just as you touched my hand, there came a mist between us—a dense and chilling mist, that made the narrow curdle in my bones, and my joints stiff and iron-bound; and a voice, a low mournful voice, like the wail of a dying bird, said, 'Come!'—and I attempted to answer, 'Not yet;' but my tongue felt frozen to my teeth, and my teeth were as icicles within my lips; and I was enshrouded in the mist. Then suddenly a pang shot through my heart, as if it were the dart of death, and I would have screamed, such was its agony; but still my tongue was frozen! And I suffered, I cannot tell you what: when suddenly a soft breath breathed upon my cheek, and it felt warm and soothing, and a voice—sounding—I may as well tell it all, Robin—so like yours, said, 'Pray.' And as I prayed—not in words, but in spirit, the pain departed from me, and the blood flowed again through my veins; and gazing upwards, I found that I was not in the ruined Chapel, but in the presence of the blessed Saviour! He looked upon us—upon us both——"

"Stop, Barbara!" exclaimed Robin, whose imagination, at all times easily worked upon, now became absolute torture, "for mercy, stop! It was but the dream of a weak girl."

For the first time since she had grown to woman's estate, he pressed her to his bosom, and then silently walked with her to the little gate that led to the garden.

"Let Crisp stay with me. Bright-eye and he agree better than usual," said Barbara with a quiet smile.

"I will," replied Robin, adding, as he turned away, "Trust in the God you worship, and put no faith in dreams."



## CHAPTER XX.

Tell men of high condition  
That rule affairs of state,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice only hate;  
And if they once reply,  
Then give them all the lie.

Tell Wit how much it wrangles  
In tickle points of niceness—  
Tell Wisdom she entangles  
Herself in over-wiseness;  
And when they do reply,  
Straight give them both the lie.

JOSHUA SILVESTER.

ROBIN had, doubtless, good reasons for the hint he had given Barbara, that she might soon again see the Buccaneer, and that she would do well to use that forbearance towards him which she had so kindly and so invariably practised towards the Ranger. After leaving her, as we have stated, in safety at one of the entrances to Cecil Place, he proceeded to the Gull's Nest. His first inquiries were concerning the boy who had contrived to steal a passage on board the Fire-fly from France to England, and who had pretended dumbness. How the youth got on board his vessel, Dalton could not imagine; although, when the discovery was made, his feigning the infirmity we have mentioned succeeded so well, that the Buccaneer absolutely believed he could neither hear nor speak, and sympathized with him accordingly. The indignation of Dalton was quickly roused by the outrage described by Robin Hays: he was, moreover, much exasperated that such a deception should have been successfully practised on himself. Nothing is so sure to anger those who duly value their penetration, as the knowledge that they have been duped by those they consider inferior to themselves: indeed, the best of us are more ready to pardon bare-faced wickedness than designing cunning;—we may reconcile ourselves to the being overpowered by the one, but scarcely ever to the being over-reached by the other.

Springall had quitted Cecil Place the morning after his encounter with Major Wellmore, of whom he persisted in speaking as "the strong spectre-man;" and neither Robin's

entreaties nor Dalton's commands could prevail on or force him again to take up his abode within the house.

"I know not why I should remain," he said; the girls flout and laugh at my 'sea-saw ways,' as they call them; and though Barbara is a trim craft, well-built and rigged too, yet her quiet smile is worse to me than the grinning of the others. I'll stay nowhere to be both frightened and scouted: the captain engaged me to weather the sea, not the land, and I'd rather bear the cat a-board the Fire-fly, or even a lecture in the good ship Providence, than be land-lagged any longer."

He was present in the room at the Gull's Nest when Robin recounted to the Buccaneer the peril in which Barbara had been placed; and the young sailor speedily forgot the meek jesting of the maiden in the magnitude of her danger.

"The black-eyed boy has not been near the house all day," added Springall, "and my own belief is, that he's no *he*, but a woman in disguise. My faith on it, Jeromio's in the secret, as sure as my name is Obey Springall! Jeromio understands all manner of lingo, and would be likely to consort with any foreigners for filthy lucre: he has ever ventures of his own, and this is one."

"There may be wisdom in thy giddy pate," observed the Buccaneer thoughtfully. "God help me! dangers and plots gather thickly around, and my wits are not brightening with my years."

"Marry, it's no woman," observed Mother Hays; "I could not be deceived—it's a dark-browed boy," lowering her voice, "very like what Prince Charlie was, as I remember him, but with rather a Jewish look for a Christian prince."

"Robin," said Dalton, taking the Ranger aside, "if this most loathsome marriage cannot be stayed—if what I mean to do should fail—my daughter must seek another home and another protector. Were Miss Cecil to become the wife of Sir Willmott Burrell, under *their* roof Barbara should not bide—the kite's nest is a bad shelter for the ring-dove."

"Where would you take her?"—who would protect her?" inquired Robin earnestly.

"Faith, I know not. I'll to Sir Robert Cecil this day—speak to him about some matters of our own, and then be guided by circumstances as to the disposal of my daughter. —My daughter! that word sends the blood to and from my heart in cold and then in hot gushing streams! But, Robin, you must not tarry;—close watch shall be set for this dangerous imp, to prevent farther mischief; and if Springall's conjecture should be right—yet it is most wild, and most

improbable!—What disguise will you adopt in this pursuit of our heedless friend?"

"As yet, I know not; I must suit it to the times and to the persons I encounter; a pedlar's will do me best at present; a pack is a fitting nook for concealment. Dear Captain, look well to Jeromio; he never meant you honest."

"I believe you are right, Robin; and yet why should I quarrel with men's honesty? they have as good a right to label mine with the foul word 'spurious.' This damning thing within my breast, that saints call conscience, how it has worked me lately! Poison is nothing to it: but it will soon be over, if the boy were safe, and my own Barbara would but pray for me, after the fashion of her mother." He paused, then striking his forehead violently, as if to banish thought, continued, "You go to London straight?"

"Ay, sure, and have secreted the invoices you spoke of, for the good merchant beyond St. Paul's, who ordered the rich velvets, counting, perhaps, upon a coronation."

"I hope he has a better chance of selling them than that affords. Noll will hardly dare it; his name—Protector—gives as much power, and 'tis as a fencing-master's guard, ever at hand to turn aside the sneers against his ambition. Thought'st thou of the pearls for my Lord Fauconberg's rich jeweller?"

"Ay, master, they are safe; those I will myself deliver; though, from what the journals say, his Lordship has small need of new trimming. 'Twas the public talk, when you made me act the respectable character of Spy in Sir Willmott Burrell's service; at the court, sir, they talked of nothing else—how the King of France, with his own hands, made him present of a gold box, inlaid with diamonds, that had upon the lid, on the outside, the arms of France, composed of three large jewels, and, in the inside, the monarch's own picture;—the Cardinal Mazarine, too, gave him a dozen pieces of the richest Genoese velvet; and then his Lordship, not to be outdone, made him a gift of equal value;—and then, I forget me what was the next—and the next—and the next—and the next; but it was mighty fine trafficking, that I know."

"Ay, Robin, 'nothing for nothing' is the statesman's motto. Now give you good speed and success! You can send to me almost from any part of the kingdom in a few hours. Spare no efforts for his freedom—Jack Roupall's confession proves but too truly, that Sir Willmott is sworn against his life; and till that ruffian is done for, or quieted, there is no safety for Walter. I have sent Jack on private work to the West; so he is out of the way—that's one com-

fort. Great interest have I in the boy; next to my own child, there is nothing I love so much. And now, Robin, farewell!"

When Robin bade adieu to his mother, she began to weep and wail, after the natural custom of mothers, high and low. "Ah! you are ever on the rove; ever on the wander! You will be on your ranges, some of these odd days, when I depart this life; and then you'll never know what I have to tell you."

"If it were any thing worth telling, you would have told it long ago; for a woman cannot keep a secret, that we all know."

"Ah, boy! boy! God Bless you, and good-b'ye! I wonder will that wench, Barbara, think to send me a bit of the bride-cake? I warrant I have a sweet tooth in my head still, albeit I have but two." And after some more idle talk, and much caressing, they parted.

"My poor old mother!" thought Robin Hays, "she does excellently well as a mother for me; but think of such as Barbara calling her by such a title!" And he whistled on his way, though not "for want of thought;" his feelings and affections were divided between Barbara Iverk and Walter De Guerre.

We must now proceed with Hugh Dalton a second time to Cecil Place. His interview with the Baronet was of a nature very different from that with which our narrative commenced. Sir Robert seemed as if the weight of a hundred years had been pressed upon his brow; indeed, Time could not have so altered any man. It was not the deed of Time that made the eye vigilant, even in its dimness—the hand, though trembling almost to palsy, fumble with the sword-handle—that racked the poor, withering, and shrinking brain, within its multiplied cabinets, by a thousand terrors—Such was not the work of Time. How different was his, from the hoary, but holy age, that ushers an aged, and it may be a worn, but godly and grateful spirit, to an eternity of happiness!—when the records of a good man's life may be traced by the gentle furrows that nature, and not crime, has ploughed upon the brow—the voice, sweet, though feeble, giving a benison to all the living things of this fair earth—the eye, gentle and subdued, sleeping calmly within its socket—the heart, trusting in the present, and hoping in the future; judging by itself of others, and so judging kindly (despite experience) of all mankind, until Time may have chimed out his warning notes!

A thousand and a thousand times had Sir Robert cursed the evil destiny that prompted him to confess his crime to

his daughter; and his curses were more bitter, and more deep, when he found that Sir Willmott Burrell had played so treacherous a part, and inveigled him under total subjection.

"And is it Sir William Burrell who is to procure me a free pardon and an acknowledged ship? Trust my case to Sir Willmott Burrell!" growled Dalton, as he sat opposite the enfeebled Baronet: his hands clenched, his brows knit, and his heart swelling in his bosom with contending feelings,—*"Trust my case to Sir Willmott Burrell!"* he repeated. "And so, Sir Robert Cecil, you have sold your soul to the Devil for a mess of pottage, a mess of poisoned pottage! You have not, you say, the poor power of obtaining the most trifling favour for yourself. But I say again, look to it; for, I here swear I will either have my suit or my revenge."

"Revenge has come!" groaned forth the unfortunate man. "Is it not enough that my child, that high-souled, noble creature, knows of my guilt? All this day, and yesterday too, she would not see me. I know how it is—I am as a leper in her eyes."

"Your daughter!—your daughter know your crime!" said the Buccaneer: "How, how was that?—Who told, who could have told her such a thing?—who had the heart?—But stay!" he continued, with his rude but natural energy, the better feelings of his nature coming out at once, when he understood what the Baronet must have endured under such circumstances:—"Stay, you need not tell me; there is but one man upon earth who could so act, and that man is Sir Willmott Burrell.—The villain made a shrewd guess, and fooled ye into a confession. I see through it all!—And are you so mean a coward?" he continued, turning upon Sir Robert a look of ineffable contempt,—*"are you cowardly enough to sacrifice your daughter to save yourself? I see it now; the secret that Burrell has wormed from you, is the spear that pushes her to the altar; and you—you suffer this, and sell her and her lands to stay his tongue! Man, man, is there no feeling at your heart? Have ye a heart? I—I—a rude untaught savage, whose hands are stained with blood, even to the very bone; who have been as a whirlwind, scattering desolation; over the deck of whose vessel has floated the pennon of every land, working destruction as a pastime; I, myself, would brand myself as a brigand and a Buccaneer—scorch the words, in letters of fire, on my brow, and stand to be gazed upon by the vile rabble at every market-cross in England, sooner than suffer my humble child to sacrifice the least portion of herself for me!"*

Dalton paused for breath; Sir Robert Cecil hid his face from the flashing of his angry eye.

"Dalton!" he said at length, "I cannot do it, honoured as I have been, bearing so long an unspotted name, venerated at the court, praised by the people? Besides, I am sure Sir Willmott loves her; his whole conduct proves——"

"Him to be what I have often declared him, and will again once more,—a double-distilled villain!" interrupted the Buccaneer with renewed energy. "But what is this to me?" he added, stopping abruptly in the midst of his sentence; "What have I to do with it? My revenge upon you both is certain, unless my own purpose be accomplished—and it shall be accomplished for my child's sake. I will find out Sir Willmott, and tell him so to his teeth. Sir Robert Cecil, farewell! You, I suppose, are a courtly, a gentlemanly father! Pity that such should ever have children!" and gathering his cloak around him, he left the room without uttering another word.

We may omit our account of the interview between the Buccaneer and Sir Willmott Burrell; merely observing that it had the effect of chafing both in no ordinary degree.

"If I did but dare show myself at Whitehall," muttered Dalton, as he quitted the room in which he had conversed with his base opponent, "how I should be revenged! Nay, the delight I should feel in giving their deserts to both, would make me risk my life, were it not for my girl's sake; but my pardon once obtained, sets me at liberty in England—Let them look to it, then."

As he loitered in one of the passages leading to the back entrance, Barbara crossed his path. At first she did not recognise him, for in the day-time he wore many disguises; and his present one was, a Geneva band and gown, covered with a long cloak of black serge. Having coldly returned his salutation, she turned into a closet to avoid farther parley; but he followed, and shut the door. Barbara, who on all occasions was as timid and as helpless as a hare, trembled from head to foot, and sank on the nearest seat, her eyes fixed upon the Skipper and her quivering lip as pale as ashes.

"Barbara," he said, "you are afraid of me—you are afraid of me, child," he repeated, almost angry with her at the moment, although the feeling was so perfectly natural.

"Robin told me not to be afraid," she replied, at last; and then looking about for a chair, pointed to one at the farthest corner of the small room. "There is a seat, sir!"

"I see you want me to be as far away from you as possible, Barbara," he replied, smiling mournfully.

"Not now," she said, rising, and moving nearer, until she stood at his side and looked into his face, pleased at the softened expression of his features; "I am not, indeed, afraid of you now, sir. The first thing I did not like you for, was for offering me money; the second—but I beg your pardon," (bowing her head.)—"I make too free, perhaps?" Dalton, gratified at any mark of confidence, encouraged her to go on—"The second was—your name;—I heard of a daring man called Hugh Dalton—a ruthless, cruel man—a man of——"

"Speak out, Barbara; you cannot anger me."

"A man of blood!" and she shuddered at her own words. "But I am sure one thing Mistress Cecil said was true—that we are not to put faith in all we hear.' Now, I believe all she says, and all Robin Hays says; and he speaks so kindly of you. And another thing, sir, makes me think so well of you is—that you knew my father—Nay, I am sure you did," she continued, laying her hand on his arm and looking into his countenance, which he turned away to conceal his emotion. "I am certain you did; Robin told me as much, and Mistress Constance did not deny it; and now that you are here, so gentle and so kind, I am sure you will tell me. Do, dear, good sir. Did you not know my father? my poor dear, dear father!"

All Dalton's resolutions of silence, all his resolves melted into airy nothings at the sound of that sweet soft voice. Tears, the only tears of pleasure that had for years moistened the cheek of the reckless Buccaneer, burst from his eyes: he could not speak; he felt weak as a new-born infant; his limbs trembled; he would have fallen to the ground, had not the feeble girl supported him. In a moment she perceived and understood the whole truth, and exclaimed—

"You—you are my father!"

"And you do not shrink? Do not turn away from me," he said fondly. "How like your mother you are, now that your eyes are filled with love, not fear!"

"And my mother loved you?" she inquired.

"Ay, girl. Why do you ask?"

"Because," replied Barbara, laying her head on his bosom, as if, like a young bird, she had found a home and peace within the parent nest, "because, if my mother loved you, you cannot be a bad man; and I am satisfied."

The most beautiful feature in Barbara's character was, as we have said, her trustfulness; she had no idea of guilt. She heard of crime as a thing abroad in the world, but she could never identify it with persons: her mind was a compound of feeling and affection; and with the beautiful and

earnest simplicity of truth, she perfectly believed that her father could not be wicked.

"I will tell my lady how my mother loved you, and then she will know you cannot be the wild man we took you for."

"Tell her nothing, sweet, about me. In a little time I shall be able to take you to a proper home; only mark this, you must never go to the home of Sir Willmott Burrell."

"Ah! he is very wicked, I have heard; and yet you see how wrong it is to believe evil of any one; but I know that he is evil, if ever man was," was the maid's reply, reverting almost unconsciously to her father's situation.

"Let us talk of nothing evil, Barbara, during the few moments I can remain with you now. Remember, you are to tell your lady nothing about me."

"I do not see how I can help it."

"Why?"

"Because she has ever told me to tell her all things, and I have obeyed. Ah, sir—father, you know not how good she is to me, and how she cries, dear lady! Ever since this marriage has been fixed upon, she has wept unceasingly."

The Buccaneer felt at the moment as all parents must feel who desire to preserve their children in innocence, and yet themselves lead vicious lives. To the wicked, lies are as necessary as the air they breathe, as common for use as household stuff. Had Barbara been what is now termed a clever girl, the Buccaneer might have employed her, not as an agent of falsehood—that his delicate love of his child would have prevented—but as an instrument, perhaps, to work some delay in a wedding that humanity, independently of one or two new and latent causes, called upon him to prevent; but in any plot where finesse was necessary, he saw that Barbara would be perfectly useless; and before taking his departure, he only told her she might, if she pleased, inform Mistress Cecil, but at the same time begged of her not to repeat to any one else that he had been there. This Barbara promised to do; and on the assurance that he would soon return, and enable her to show her lady that, instead of being the wild man they both took him for, he was a very peaceable (how the Buccaneer smiled at the word!) person, she suffered him to depart, and then went into her little room, to arrange her ideas, and offer up thanksgivings that she had found a father, together with prayers for his safety.



## CHAPTER XXI.

But now, no star can shine, no hope be got,  
 Most wretched creature, if he knew his lot,  
 And yet more wretched far because he knows it not.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 The swelling sea seethes in his angry waves,  
 And smites the earth that dares the traitors nourish.  
 GILES FLETCHER.

THE Buccaneer failed not to inquire relative to the pretended dumb boy, but without success: he appeared to have vanished suddenly from before their eyes, and had left no trace behind. After despatching one or two trusty messengers on some particular embassies, Dalton concealed himself in the secret recesses of the crag until the evening fell sufficiently to enable him to get off to the Fire-fly without attracting the observation of any stragglers, or persons who might be on the watch for him or his vessel, which he had left, as before, under the superintendence of Jeromio, with strict orders to move about off Shellness Point, and the strand at Leysdown, and to be ready, on a particular signal, to heave-to and cast anchor nearly opposite the Gull's Nest. Three times had Dalton lighted his beacon on the top of the ruined tower, and three times extinguished it: the signal was at length answered, although not according to his directions, which were light for light. The Buccaneer was, however, satisfied; descended by the private stair to the shore, and pushed off his little boat, having called in vain for Springall, whom he had left at Gull's Nest in the morning.

The motion of the oars was but a mechanical accompaniment to his thoughts, which wandered back to his child, to his next beloved, Walter, and to the events through which his chequered life had passed during the last year. Strong as was now Hugh Dalton's affection for his daughter, it is doubtful if it would have had force enough to make him relinquish so completely his wandering and ruthless habits, and adopt the design of serving for a little time under the banner of the Commonwealth, before he completely gave up the sea, had not his declining constitution warned him that at fifty-five he was older than at thirty. He had grown a wiser and a better man than when, in middle age, he ran full tilt with his passions at all things that impeded his progress or his views. A long and dangerous illness, off the Caribbees,

had sobered him more in one little month, than any other event could have done in years. Away from bustle and excitement, he had had time for reflection, and when he arose from his couch, he felt that he was no longer the firm, strong man he had been. The impressions of early life, too, returned; he longed for his child, and for England; but when he remembered her mother, he could not support the idea that Barbara should know him as he really was. Still his restless mind suggested that occupation would be necessary, and his busy brain soon fixed upon the only way by which honourable employment could be obtained. England had been, for a long series of years, in a perturbed and restless state, and Dalton had made himself well known, both by his ingenuity, energy, and bravery: he had been useful as a smuggler, and imported many things of rich value to the Cavaliers—trafficking, however, as we have seen, in more than mere contraband articles.

Sir Robert Cecil, as we have shown, was not always the possessor of Cecil Place; and the secret of whatever course he had adopted, or crime he had committed, to obtain such large possessions, was in the keeping of Hugh Dalton.

Cromwell had not at all times watched as carefully over the private transactions of individuals, as he was disposed to do during the latter years of his Protectorate. Persons obnoxious to the Commonwealth had frequently disappeared; and though Oliver's system of espionage was never surpassed, not even by the Cromwell of modern years; yet it had been his policy to take little or no note of such matters: uniting in himself the most extraordinary mixture of craft and heroism that ever either disfigured or adorned the page of history.

Dalton and such men were no longer necessary to bear from the shores of England the excrescences of royalty. Time, the sword, or stratagem had greatly thinned their numbers; yet many recent events proved that loyalists were imported, and assassins hired, and let loose in the country by contraband ships; until, at length, the Protector was roused, and resolved to check the pirates and smugglers of our English strands, as effectually as the gallant and right noble Blake had exterminated them on the open sea.

No one was better acquainted with the character, the deeds, and misdeeds of Hugh Dalton, than the all-seeing Cromwell; and so firm a heart as the Protector's could not but marvel at and admire, even though he could neither approve nor sanction, the bravery of the Fire-fly's commander. Dalton knew this, and, in endeavouring to obtain an authorized ship, acted according to such knowledge. He felt that Cromwell would never pardon him, unless he could

make him useful; a few cruises in a registered vessel, and then peace and Barbara, was his concluding thought, whilst, resting on his oars, he looked upon his beautiful brigantine, as she rode upon the waters at a long distance yet, the heavens spangled with innumerable stars for her canopy, and the ocean, the wide unfathomable ocean, spreading from pole to pole, circling the round earth as with a girdle, for her dominion.

It was one of those evenings that seem "breathless with adoration;" the gentleness of heaven was on the sea; there was not a line, not a ripple on the wide waste of waters; "the winds," to use again the poet's eloquent words, "were up, gathered like sleeping flowers." There was no light in the vessel's bow—no twinkle from the shore—no ship in sight—nothing that told of existence but his own Fire-fly, couching on the ocean like a sleeping bird.

"There is a demon spirit within her," whispered Dalton to himself; "the sight of her sends me wild again. Devil that she is! so beautiful! so well proportioned! Talk of the beauty of woman!—But I'll look to her no more—I'll think of her no more!"

He again applied himself to the oar, and was pulling steadily towards the ship, when his eye rested upon something black and round in the water. Again he paused in his exertions, and lay-to: the substance floated towards him. He would have shouted, but—no sailor is ever free from superstitious qualms of one sort or another—he remained silent, fixing his eye steadily upon the object. At last it came close, quite close to the boat; and in another instant, Springall was seated in the prow,

"Why, Spring! what's the matter? are you mad? Has any thing occurred yonder?" exclaimed Dalton, somewhat alarmed.

"Hush!" replied the panting youth: "I can hardly breathe yet." The Skipper was going to pull towards the ship; but the youth laid his hand on that of his master, and ejaculated, "Wait!"

Dalton complied, and when Springall could speak, he communicated what astonished the Buccaneer in no small degree:—He said that, having hunted about for the strange blade to no purpose, he tacked off towards the ship, and told Jeromio his master had found that the boy was no boy, but a girl in disguise; that he therefore desired Jeromio to tell him who she really was, as he had secreted her on ship-board, knowing perfectly well she was neither deaf nor dumb:—That Jeromio said, as the master had fished it up, there was no use in making any bones about the matter; for how it happened was, that when they were lying off St. Valle-

ry, this girl, whom he believed to be a Jewess, offered him a large sum of money if he would secrete her on board, at all events until the ship sailed, and if—after concealment was impossible—he would not betray her. She stipulated to be landed upon the Kentish coast; and Jeromio added, that he was sure she had a design upon the life of somebody, and it might be easily guessed who, as she prevailed on him to show her the use and management of fire-arms, and had, besides, a dagger, which she usually carried in her bosom:—That, as she wrote English very imperfectly, she had bribed him to write a letter to Mistress Cecil, saying that, before God, she was the wife of Sir Willmott Burrell, and that if she (Mistress Cecil) persisted in marrying him, she would be revenged!—That he (Jeromio) kept back the letter, because he feared his hand-writing might eventually lead to a discovery that he had been the means of bringing her to England.—Springall detailed this intelligence in much less time than it has occupied us to repeat it; and then pausing, added—

“But the worst is yet to come. Jeromio—Master, I was right about that fellow!—had hardly finished this account, when a boat hove out, and, at first, we thought it was you, but presently who should come on board but Sir Willmott Burrell, as large as life! Well, Jeromio was precious frightened, as you may suppose, and said it was to inquire after the Jewess; but he took the Italian into your Cabin, and—I can’t but own I was vastly anxious to know what they were saying—”

The greatest villain in the world dislikes to be thought a listener, on the same principle that men would rather be accused of crime than cowardice—of vice than folly; poor Springall stopped and stammered until commanded to go on.

“It was a fine day, and, thinking I should like a bath, I let myself down close by the cabin-window with a rope. The window was open, and as I hung half in and half out of the water, I could hear every syllable they said, the sea was so calm. Not a word about the Jewess; but that precious villain was listening to a proposal made by the other villain to seize you, this very night, in your own ship, and murder you outright! It’s true, master, as I’m alive! Then Jeromio said it would be better to deliver you up, as a rover, to the Government; but Sir Willmott made reply, *that* might answer *his* purpose, but it would not do for *him*. Then he promised him a free pardon, and tempted him with the riches of the Crag, and other things;—and, as well as I could understand, they fully agreed upon it. And then, for fear of discovery, I was mounting up, when the rope, as ill-luck would have it, broke, and I went tilt splash into the

water! Well, Jeromio looked out, and swore at me: but it mattered not: I scrambled up, resolving, as you may suppose, to keep a good look-out; but that double devil, Sir Willmott, was at it again, and would have it that I was listening, and so I was clapped under hatches; and hard enough I found it to steal off to you."

"The villain!" exclaimed the Buccaneer. "But the thing is impracticable; there are not more than ten or a dozen of her crew ashore: my brave fellows would never see their Captain murdered!"

"On what pretext I know not, but he has, during the afternoon, sent the long-boat off with the truest hands aboard. I heard the men talking, as they passed backwards and forwards, that Bill o' Dartmouth, Sailing Jack, Mat Collins, and the Fire-fly rovers, as we used to call them,—those boys who had been aboard with you in foreign parts,—had gone ashore by your orders; and I know there are five or six—those Martinicos and Sagrinios, and the devil's own O's, that are 'fore and aft in all things with Jeromio. There's no putting faith in any of them, seeing they have a natural antipathy towards us English. So, now let us put back, sir."

"Put back!" repeated Dalton, casting a look of scorn upon poor Springall; "the man's not born who could make me put back!—The ship's my own—and the sea, the broad sea we look upon, is mine, as long as I have strength to dip an oar in its brine, or wit to box a compass! Avast! avast! boy; you know not what you speak of when you talk to Hugh Dalton of putting back!"

"They'll murder us both!" said Springall, in a mournful, and almost a reproachful tone.

"My poor boy!" replied Dalton, looking in his face, and poising on high the oar he had so vigorously dipped in the blue wave, "My true-hearted boy! it would be indeed, a bad recompense for your devotedness, to lead you into the tiger's den;—for myself, I have no fear;—I will put you on shore, and return."

"Never, master!" exclaimed the lad. "There is no one in the wide wide world I care for but yourself. To serve you, I would venture all. No, no, master, I may be but a poor weak boy in some things, but in this I am a man. I will never leave you while I have power to serve you."

"And you will not repent it," observed the Buccaneer; the spirit of former days fallying round his heart at the idea of danger, which ever appeared to him the path to glory: "You will not repent it—in a right cause too. What can I have to fear? I know that the instant I show myself among them, they will return as one man to their duty; and if they do not!—"

As they neared the vessel, they perceived that not more than five or six of their comrades were, like shadowy things, pacing the deck. Jeromio himself, however, they noted, waiting to receive them.

Dalton, who was vigilant as brave, had previously thrown his boat-cloak over Springall, so that he might not be recognized, and handed him a cutlass and pistol. Whether the appearance of two, when he only expected one, or whether the natural dread with which he always, despite himself, regarded his Captain, overpowered Jeromio, we may not guess; but as the Buccaneer strode up the ladder, his penetrating look steadily fixed upon the wily Italian, his quick eye perceived that twice he attempted to level a pistol; while his more cowardly accomplices crowded behind him. Had the villain possessed courage enough to fire as Dalton was ascending, his life would in all probability have been the sacrifice; but once upon the deck of his own ship, he was indeed a sea-king! For an instant he stood proudly before Jeromio; then, presenting his pistol to the head of the Italian, who trembled violently, he said as calmly as if he were in the midst of friends:

"One moment's prayer; and thus I punish traitors——"

There was a breathless silence; one might have heard a pin drop upon the deck; the very air seemed to listen within the furled sails. Jeromio's pistol fell from his grasp; he clasped his hands in agony, and falling before the Buccaneer, upon his knees, uttered a brief prayer, for well he knew that Dalton never recalled a doom, and he felt that all had been discovered! In another instant a flash passed along the ship, and danced in garish light over the quiet sea! The bullet lodged within a brain ever ready to plot, but never powerful to execute. With unmoved aspect Dalton replaced the weapon, and planting his foot upon the prostrate dead, drew another from his belt. Springall was still by his side, ready to live or die with his commander.

"Come on! come on!" said Dalton, after surveying the small and trembling band of mutineers, as a lion of the Afric deserts gazes upon a herd of hounds by whom he is beset. "Come on!" and the sentence sounded like the tolling of a death-bell over the waters, so firmly yet solemnly was it pronounced, as if the hearts of a thousand men were in it. "Come on! Are ye afraid? We are but two. Or are ye still men; and do ye think upon the time when I led ye on to victory, when I divided the spoil of many caskets among ye? Ye are friends—countrymen of this—that was a man; yet if ye will, ye shall judge between us. Did I deserve this treachery at his hands? can one of you accuse me of injustice?"

A loud, a reiterated "No," answered this appeal, and the

mutineers rushed forward, not to seize on, but to lay down their weapons at the feet of their Captain.

"Take up your arms," said Dalton, after casting his eye over them, and perceiving at a single glance that they had truly delivered them all. "Take up your arms: ye were only beguiled; ye are too true to be really treacherous."

This most wise compliment operated as oil on the tossing sea: the ship-mob fancied they were acting according to the dictates of reason, when they were really under the influence of fear, and then they aroused the tranquillity of the night, shouting long and loudly for the Fire-fly and the brave Buccaneer!

Although the unfortunate Jeromio had cunningly despatched several of Dalton's most approved friends in the long-boat to the shore on some pretended business, yet others had been secured below; and, when they were liberated, they created great and noisy jubilee at what they jestingly called "the Restoration." Springall had orders to distribute among them, and without distinction, abundance of rum, while Dalton retired to his cabin, still unmoved, to pen some despatches, which he deemed necessary to send to the main-land that night.

When he returned on deck, the revellers had retired, and the watch was set. Many of the stars that had witnessed the events we have recorded, had sunk, and others had risen in their stead. The midnight air was chill and cold; Jeromio's body lay where it had fallen, stiffening in its gore; for no one cared to meddle with it till the Skipper's pleasure was known as to how it was to be disposed of. Dalton gazed upon it but for an instant, and then ordered that a man named Muddy, the black, and butcher of the ship, should attend him.

"Here, Muddy," he exclaimed, "chop me off that rascal's head—quick, do it!" The brute carelessly performed his task. "Now roll the carcase in a sail, and, being well leaded, throw it overboard. Wrap me the head in a clean napkin; I would fain make a present to Sir Willmott Burrell—a wedding present he may think it, if he will. The head to which he trusted, will serve the purpose well. I will not send you, Springall, on this errand," he continued, laying his hand gently on the shoulder of the trembling boy, who sickened at the disgusting sight. "Go to your hammock; you shall not sleep there many nights more. You are too good for such a life as this!"

He then directed two of his men to row to land, and leave the parcel at the gate of Cecil Place. He also gave them other packets to deliver, with orders to those of his crew who were still on shore; and then, his ship being under sail for another division of the coast, like a mighty but perturbed spirit, he paced the deck till morning.

## CHAPTER XXII.

I am not prone to weeping as our sex  
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew  
Perchance shall dry, your pities; but I have  
That honourable grief lodged here, which burns  
Worse than tears drown.

SHAKESPEARE.

It is curious to note how differently persons known to each other, and, it may be, endeared by the ties of relationship, or the still stronger ones of friendship, are occupied at some precise moment, although separated but by a little distance, and for a brief space of time. Life is one great kaleidoscope, where it is difficult to look upon the same picture twice; so varied are its positions, and so numerous its contrasts, according to the will of those who move and govern its machinery. While the hand of the Buccaneer was dyed in blood, his child was sleeping calmly on her pillow;—Sir Robert Cecil pondering over the events of the day, and drawing conclusions as to the future, from which even hope was excluded;—Sir Willmott Burrell exulting in what he deemed the master-stroke of his genius;—and Constance Cecil, the fountain of whose tears was dried up, permitted Lady Frances Cromwell to sit up with her, while she assorted various letters, papers, and other matters, of real or imaginary value, of which she was possessed. Within that chamber one would have thought that Death was the expected bridegroom, so sadly and so solemnly did the bride of the morrow move and speak. She had ceased to discourse of the approaching change, and conversed with her friend only at intervals, upon topics of a trifling nature; but in such a tone, and with such a manner, as betrayed the aching heart; seldom waiting for, or hearing a reply, and sighing heavily, as every sentence obtained utterance. Her companion fell into her mood, with a kindness and gentleness hardly to be expected from one so light and mirthful.

"I am sure," she observed, "I have deeper cause for grief than you, Constantia; my father is so obstinate about Mr. Rich. He treats his family as he does the acts of his Parliament, and tries to make use of both for the good of the country."



Constantia smiled a smile of bitterness; Lady Frances little knew the arrow, the poisoned arrow that rankled in her bosom.

"Oh, I see you are preserving Mrs. Hutchinson's letters. How my sister Claypole esteems that woman! Do you think she really loves her husband as much as she says?"

"I am sure of it," was Constantia's reply, "because he is worthy of such love. I received one letter from her, lately; she knew that I was to be—to change my name—and kindly (for the virtuous are always kind) wrote to me on the subject; read over these passages."

Lady Frances was about to read them aloud, but Constantia prevented her.

"I have read it over and over, dearest, though wherefore I hardly know; my lot is cast in a way so different from that she imagines. The precepts are for the promotion of happiness, which I can never expect to enjoy—never to be cited as an example of connubial excellence. I shall leave no record that people in after years will point at, and say, Behold, how lovingly they lived together! But read it, Frances, read it: to you it may prove salutary, for you will be happy in your union, and with one whom you can love."

The Lady Frances took the letter with a trembling hand, and read as follows:—

"Richmond, 1657, the 2d day of June.

"Your letter, which I had the happiness to receive some time since, my dear young friend, notwithstanding its melancholy theme, afforded me real satisfaction. It is true that your loving mother has been removed; but blessed is the knowledge which instructs you that she and all her excellencies came from God, and have now but been taken back to their own most perfect source; that you are parted for a moment to meet again for eternity! Her soul conversed so much with God while it was here, that it rejoices to be now freed from interruption in that hallowed exercise. Her virtues were recorded in Heaven's annals, and can never perish: by them she yet teaches us, and all those to whose knowledge they shall arrive. 'Tis only her fetters that have been removed; her infirmities, her sorrows that are dead never to revive again,—nor would we have them; we may mourn for ourselves that we walk so tardily in her steps, that we need her guidance and assistance on the way. And yet, dearest Constance, but that the veil of tearful mortality is before our eyes, we should see her, even in Heaven, holding forth the bright lamp of virtuous example and pre-

cept, to light us through the dark world we must for a few years tread.

"But I have heard tidings lately, and from the Lady Claypole too, of which, methinks, to your mother's friend, you have been over chary. Ah! maidens care not to prate of their love affairs to matrons. Silly things! they would go their own course, and think for themselves! without knowing how to go, or what to think! The besetting sin of youth is—presumption: but it is not your sin, my gentle girl; it was some species of modesty withheld your pen—yet I heard it. My husband, albeit not a very frequent guest at Whitehall, pays his respects there sometimes, mainly out of his duty and regard to the Lady Claypole; for he is no scorner of our sex, and holds it a privilege to converse with wise and holy women. She informed him, and not as a matter of secrecy, that you would soon be wedded to Sir Willmott Burrell; and, although we know him not, we readily believe that he is a good and honest gentleman, commanding our esteem, because beloved of you—the which, I pray you, advise him of—and say we hope he will number us among his friends. I never doubted your wisdom, Constantia, and those cannot wed well who do not wed wisely. By wisely, I do not mean that longing after foolish gain and worldly aggrandizement, which vain women, alas! covet more than the enjoyment of their lives and the salvation of their souls. I would have a woman seek for her husband, one whom she can love with an ardent, but not idolatrous passion; capable of being a firm, consistent friend; who has sufficient knowledge and virtue to sit in council within her bosom, and direct her in all things. Having found such, the wife should desire and strive to be as a very faithful mirror, reflecting truly, however dimly, his own virtues. I have been long wedded, and, thank God, most happily so. We have become as a proverb among our friends; and matrons, when they bless their daughters at the altar, wish them to be as happy as Lucy Hutchinson. Had your blessed mother lived, my advice might have been almost impertinent; but now, I am sure you will not take it ill of a most true friend to speak a little counsel: my words may be but as dew-drops, yet there is a spirit within you that can convert them into pearls. But counsel ought to be preceded by prayer—and I have prayed—Will you take ill the supplication? I know you will not.

"I am also sure that you will not consider unacceptable the prayer I am about to transcribe in this my letter. It was written by my dear husband, some time after the exceeding goodness of God made us one; and we feel much comfort

and encouragement in repeating it each morn and eve, ere the cares and turmoils of the day are come, or when they have departed. May it have a like influence on you, my sweet friend! May your destiny be as mine!

"O Lord, divine uniter of true hearts! Grant to thy servants an increase of the blessed gift of grace, which is wrought into the soul by thy regenerating Spirit, that so the whole creature may be resigned unto thy will, human love be subservient to that which is heavenly, and all its thoughts, hopes, and actions be directed to thy glory, with whom is its source, and from whom its blessing cometh. Two pray unto thee as one, one in heart, one in interest, one for time, one for eternity. So may it ever be, O Lord! our Maker and our guide, our protector and our friend. We bless and thank thee for the comfort we have found in each other, for the worldly prosperity to which virtue, trustfulness, and faith in thy care have conducted us; for the mutual esteem, confidence, and affection that sway and direct our frail natures, but, above all, for the sure and certain knowledge that when our mortal shall have put on immortality, we shall be one—undivided, inseparable, and eternal."

"Tis brief, Constantia, but long supplications too often lose in spirit that which the heart cannot make up in words. Prayer should be the concentrated essence of humility, perfumed by Hope, and elevated by Faith; but you know all this as well as I. I would not presume to instruct, or give you advice upon any point, save this most blessed or most miserable one, (to a mind like yours it can have no medium,)—marriage! Many young females are beguiled by evil counsel and thus commence in a careless or obstinate course, which leads them into the thorny path of discontent, and consequent wretchedness. And, first of all, do not fancy that petty tyrannies become a bride. It is the habit of the bridegroom to yield to such like; but trust me, he loves you not the better for weak fantasies, unless he be a fool; and I pen no lines for fools, or fools' mates. I have no sympathy with a woman, weak or wicked enough to wed a fool. In the honeymoon, then, study your husband's temper; for the best of men, and woman too—carry (it may be unconsciously) a mask during the days of courtship, which, if not taken off, wears off and you must strive to know him as he really is; remembering that though lovers may be angels, husbands are only mortals. Looking within at the imperfection of our own nature, we learn to make allowance for the faults they may possess.

For my own part, my only wonder has been how a man, like Colonel Hutchinson, could so kindly pity my infirmities, and correct them after such a fashion that his blame has ever sounded sweeter in my ears than the praise of the whole world besides. He has looked upon my errors with an indulgent eye, and not suffered them to detract from his esteem and love for me, while it has been his tender care to

erase all those blots which make me appear less worthy the respect he every where pays me.

"One thing, although I hardly need recall it to a mind like yours, is, above all else, necessary to be remembered—that a maiden has only her own honour in keeping, but a wife has her husband's as well as her own. It was a fine saying that of the ancient Roman: 'The wife of Cæsar must not be suspected.' Suspicion is too often, as the plague-spot, the intimator of a disease, which may either break out, or be suppressed by care or circumstances; but still the intimation has gone forth. Reserve is the becoming garment for the wedded wife—that sweet reserve springing from holy love, which the chastened eye, the moderated smile, the elevated carriage—all betokened;—a something which a pure heart alone can teach, and that a sullied woman never can assume. Study the accomplishments your husband loves with continued assiduity: he may delight in seeing the beauties of his estate miniaturized by your pencil, or the foliage of a favourite tree doomed to perpetual spring on your obedient canvass; or, peradventure, delight more in the soft touching of your lute or harpsichord: whatever it may be, study to do it quickly, and cultivate your taste unto his pleasure. I say, do it quickly, in the early days of marriage, because habit is a most tyrannical master. Then, when your affections and your customs tend to the same end, and are, moreover, guided by the all-powerful hand of duty, and under the especial control of godliness, I have little doubt that you will make all that a wife should be.

"I would fain counsel you on the custom of a neat and becoming attire; but I have observed that you ever habit yourself, from an innate consciousness of what is just and becoming in your station, and that not from any caring for occasion or love of display. A tall and stately figure, like yours, becomes well the rich satins of France, and the still richer velvets of Genoa; yet I prefer to see a British woman adorned by the artisans of her own land, and I have lately seen some articles of such manufacture of most rare beauty. As to your jewels, consider your husband's desire: if he care for them, deck yourself with much attention, and wear those that please him best. Your mother's diamonds were of the finest water, as befitted her rank, and I am sure you will never carry counterfeits, whether of gems or of gold. I have heard of those who affect the vanity of great expenditure at small cost, and I hold them in contempt; for every thing about a woman should emblem her own heart, and be pure, even as she is pure. Simplicity in dress is ever in harmony with beauty, and never out of place; yet are there state

times when it is expected that the high-born carry bravery, as the horses bear high and waving plumes—to make the pageant grand; and though his Highness, at first, deemed it expedient to lessen such extravagance, yet my dear husband assures me that his children lack nothing worthy the state of princes.

“But all these matters must be left to the discretion of your judgment, which, if well-tempered, will direct them in a fitting manner; always remembering, the most seemingly insignificant point that contributes the smallest atom to domestic happiness is worthy the attention of a truly wise and peace-loving female. It is better not to be concerned about trifles; but some men, and men not of particularly small minds either, are very anxious as to the things which appear of no moment: in that case, the best way is to humour them, and then, by introducing some strong motive, wile them on to better: this must be done skilfully, or it will fail of success. A woman's first desire should be her husband's goodness; her next, his greatness. Matrimony is a bondage, but one that carries with it the protection which is as necessary to a woman as the air she breathes; with a tender husband, after a little time, she will find the chains so overgrown by affection, which is the woodbine of the moral garden, that, instead of being enslaved, behold, she finds peace, love, and safety within the charmed circle.

“I commenced a letter, my sweet friend, yet, I fear me, have written a homily; but forgive it, Constance, and take it as it is intended.

“I hear the Lady Frances is with you. I pray you call me to her remembrance. She is a lively but honourable lady, and I should be glad that Mr. Rich found favour in the sight of her father; for I do believe her heart has been fixed, at least more fixed upon him than upon any other, for some time. We have been passing a few days in this dear spot—the nest, I may well call it, of our affections. My husband, in the days of his bachelorhood, had been cautioned to take heed of Richmond, as a place so fatal to love, that never any disengaged young person went thither who returned again free; and I wonder not at it, for there is a sober and most happy beauty in its very aspect, that tranquillizes and composes the thoughts to gentleness and affection. We have visited our old music-master, at whose house we both boarded for the practice of the lute! He was so pleased to find I still studied! observing that many married ladies relinquished it soon; and he praised my husband's execution on the viol in no small degree.

“Adieu, my dear young friend. We crave earnestly to

be kindly thought of by him whom your soul 'delighteth to honour!' May the blessing of the Lord dwell within your house, and sanctify all things for your good! Such is the prayer of your true and loving friend,

"LUCY HUTCHINSON.

"My husband, who is indeed a most kind counsellor in all things, says that I ought to tender any assistance I can offer, seeing that I am near London, and you may require sundry habits befitting a bridal; if so, command my services as fully as you do my affections."

Lady Frances placed the letter on Constantia's writing-table, and for some time offered no observation on its contents.

"Is not she a beautiful model for a married woman?" inquired Constance.

"It was very good of her to remember a giddy pate like me," replied Frances; "and I do confess that she is one of my perfections, though in general I hate your pattern-women, where every thing is fitted and fitting—women of plaster and parchment—to cut one's character by; who are to be spoken of, not to; who can make no excuse for people's failings, because they think they are themselves exempt from fault; who study devout looks, and leer at their lovers from under their hoods—hole-and-corner flirts, yet held up as pattern-women, bless the term! to innocent and laughter-loving maidens, like myself, who having no evil to conceal, speak openly, and love not the Conventicle.

"But Mrs. Hutchinson is none of these," interrupted Constance. "She is pure in heart—in word—in look. She really has nothing to conceal; she is all purity and grace, and with her husband shared for years the friendship of the illustrious Selden and Archbishop Usher."

"Well, I am willing to admit all this," retorted Frances, eager to catch at any thing to divert her friend's melancholy. "But, for all that, I never could feel easy in the society of your very wise people; it is not pleasant to know that those you are speaking to regard you as a fool, though they may be too well-bred to tell you so. And now I remember a story about Selden that always amused me much. When he was appointed among the lay members to sit in the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, one of the ministers, with all the outward show of self-sufficient ignorance, declared that the sea could not be at any very great distance from Jerusalem; that as fish was frequently carried from the first to the last place, the interval did not probably exceed

thirty miles! and having concocted this opinion, he gave it forth, as if it had been one of the laws of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not! Well, the Synod were about to adopt this inference, when Selden quietly observed that, in all likelihood, it was 'salt fish!' Was not that excellent?"

"Yet his wit, in my estimation, was his least good quality. Methinks the Commonwealth has reason to be most proud of two such men as John Selden and Archbishop Usher."

"But the glory has departed from Israel," was Frances' reply, "for they are gathered to their fathers."

"The sun may be shorn of its beams," said Constantia, with something of her former energy of manner, "but it is still a sun. Cromwell is the Protector of England!"

That was the rallying point of Lady Frances' feelings, and she embraced her friend with increased affection.

"I love you more than all," said the kind girl, "for your appreciation of my father; I only hope that posterity may do him equal justice. But why, I ask again, dear Constance, have you not permitted me to speak to him about this wedding? You reap sorrow, and not joy, of the contract. Well, well," she continued, perfectly understanding Constantia's mute appeal for silence, "I will say no more, for I ought to be satisfied with the privilege of being thus enabled to disturb the solitude you consider so sweet."

"How lessened," exclaimed Constance, "I must appear in the eyes of all good and wise people! How they will jeer at the lofty Mistress Cecil selling herself—for—they know not what!"

"Lessened!" repeated Frances; "on the contrary. You certainly do sacrifice yourself to fulfil this contract; but that deserves praise. Besides, Burrell is a man whom many admire."

"There, talk not of it, Frances—talk not of it: henceforth, the world and I are two—I mix no more in it, nor with it."

"Now, out upon you for a most silly lady!" retorted Lady Frances. "It may be my fate, despite the affection I bear *poor* Rich, (I like the linking of these words,) to wed some other man—one who will please my father and benefit the state. Is not the misery of being chained to a thing you loathe and detest sufficient cause for trouble, without emulating bats and owls! No, no; if I must be ironed, I will cover my fetters with flowers—they shall be perfumed, and tricked, and trimmed. I shall see you gay at court, dear Constance. Besides, if you are to be married, you must

not twine willow with your bridal roses—that will never do.”

There was no smile upon Constantia's lip at her friend's kind and continued efforts to remove the weight that pressed upon her heart.

“This is the last night that I can dare trust myself to speak of Walter.—Frances,” she said, after a long pause, “I have no fears for his personal safety, because I know with whom he left this house: but, one thing I would say; and if, my dearest, kindest friend, I have not prated to you of my sorrows—joys, alas! I have not to communicate—it is because I must not. With all the childish feeling of a girl you have a woman's heart, true and susceptible, as ever beat in woman's bosom. I know you have thought me cold and reserved; an iceberg, where nothing else was ice—True, I am chilled by circumstances, not by nature. I am sure you can remember when my step was as light, and my voice as happy, though not as mirthful, as your own: but the lightness and the mirthfulness have passed—Only, Frances, when the world dyes my name in its own evil colour, I pray you say——” She paused as if in great perplexity.

“Say what? Surely all the world can say is, that you did what thousands of devoted girls have done before you—married to fulfil a contract,” observed Lady Frances, who well knew that some deadly poison rankled in her heart, and almost overturned her reason.

“True, true,” repeated Constance; “I had forgotten; for I am, as you may see, bewildered by my misery. But one thing, dear Frances, you can surely do:—take this poor trinket—it perplexed you once—and if ever you should meet the Cavalier who parted lately in such company, give it him back. That simple girl, poor Barbara, found it to-day within the Fairy Ring, and brought it me—It is the only memento I had of him,” she continued, placing it in Lady Frances' hand—“the only one—There, put it away. And now, dear Frances, since you will companion me through this last night of liberty, go, fetch your lute, and sing me all the songs we learned together; or talk in your own sweet way of those we knew, esteemed, or jested at.”

“When I do sing, or when I talk, you do not listen,” replied the youngest of Cromwell's daughters, taking down her lute and striking a few wild chords: your ears are open, but their sense is shut.”

“Forgive me; but, even if it be so, your music and your voice is a most soothing accompaniment to much bitterness; it is a pretty fable, that of the nightingale resting her bosom on a thorn, while warbling her finest notes.”



"It proves to me that the nightingale who does so is a most foolish bird," retorted Frances, rallying, "inasmuch as she might select roses, instead of thorns, and they are both soft and fragrant."

"And fading," added Constance: you perceive I heard you."

"Your heart, my dear friend," replied Lady Frances, "only echoes one tone; and that is a melodious melancholy. Shall I sing you 'Withers' Shepherd's Resolution,'—my father's rhyming 'Major-general,' who lorded it so sturdily over the county of Surrey? For my own part, I like the spirit of the man, particularly as it comes forth in the third verse." And with subdued sportiveness she sung:—

"Shall a woman's virtues move  
Me to perish for her love?  
Or her well deservings knowne,  
Make me quite forget mine own?

"Be she with that goodness blest  
Which may merit name of best;  
If she be not such to me,  
What care I how good she be?

"Great, or good, or kind, or fair,  
I will ne'er the more despair;  
If she love me, this believe,  
I will die ere she shall grieve.

"If she slight me when I woo,  
I can scorn and let her go,  
If she be not fit for me,  
What care I for whom she be?"

"Do you not admire it, Constantia?" she said.

"Admire what?"

"Why, the conceit of the song."

"I fear I did not heed it. I was thinking of—of—something else."

"Shall I sing it again?"

"Not to-night, dearest: and yet you may; methinks it is the last night I shall ever listen to minstrelsy—not but that there is philosophy in music, for it teaches us to forget care; it is to the ear what perfume is to the smell. How exquisite is music! the only earthly joy of which we are assured we shall taste in heaven. Play on."

Lady Frances again sung the lay, but with less spirit than before, for she felt it was unheeded by her friend, and she laid the lute silently on the ground when she had finished.

"Do you know," said Constance, after a time, "I pity your waiting lady, who was married to Jerry White, as you call him, so unceremoniously."

"Pity her!" repeated Lady Frances, with as disdainful a toss of her head, as if she had always formed a part of the Aristocracy. "Pity her! methinks the maid was well off to obtain the man who aspired to her mistress."

"But she loved him not," observed Constantia, in a sad voice.

"Poor Jerry!" laughed lady Frances, "how could she love him; the Commonwealth jester; wanting only cap, bells, and a hobby-horse, to be fool, *par excellence*, of the British dominions! And yet he is no fool either; more knave than fool, though my father caught him at last."

"It was a severe jest," said Constantia.

"Why, it was—but verily I believe my father thought there was danger of having two fools at his court instead of one. It was after this fashion. Jerry presumed a good deal upon the encouragement his highness had given him—for the Protector loves a jest as well as any, when there is nobody by to repeat it to the grave ones: and his chaplain, Jerry White, chimed in with his humour, and was well-timed in his conceits; and this so pleased my good father, that he suffered him much in private about his person. So he fell, or pretended to fall, desperately in love with my giddy self. It was just at the time, too, when Charles Stuart made his overtures of marriage, that so caught my mother's fancy; and my imagination was marvellously moved by two such strings to my bow—a Prince and a Preacher—a rogue and a fool:—only think of it, Constantia! However, Jerry grew much too tender, and I began to think seriously I was going too far; so I told my sister Mary, and, I am sure, she told my father; for, as I was passing through a private anti-room at Whitehall, his reverence was there in ambush, and commenced his usual jargon of love and dove, faithfulness and fidelity, gentleness and gentility, and, at last, fell upon his knees, while I, half laughing, and half wondering how his rhapsody would end, as end it must—Well, there! fancy Jerry's countenance, clasped hands, and bended knees!—and I pulling my hood (I had just returned from a walk) over my face to conceal my merriment, trying to disengage my hand from the creature's claws—when, I really don't know how, but there stood my father before me, with a half smile on his lip, and his usual severity of aspect.

"My Chaplain at prayers! you are mighty devout, methinks," he said, in his coldest voice. Jerry stammered, and stumbled, and entangled his leg, in arising, with the point

of my father's sword; and then my father's choler rose, and he stormed out,—“The meaning, sir, the meaning of this idolatrous mummerly? what would ye of my daughter, the Lady Frances Cromwell? And Jerry, like all men, though he could get into a scrape, had not much tact at getting out; so he looked to me for assistance—and I gave it.”—“He is enamoured, please your Highness,” said I, with more wit than grace, “of Mistress Mabel, my chief lady.” Then, having got the clew, Jerry went on without hesitation:—“And I was praying my Lady Frances that she would interfere, and prevent Mistress Mabel from exercising so much severity towards her faithful servant.” “What ho!” said his Highness, “without there!—who waits?” One of the pages entered on the instant. “Send hither,” he commanded, “Mistress Mabel, and also that holy man of the Episcopal faith, who now tarrieth within the house.” Jerry looked confounded, and I trembled from head to foot. Mabel with her silly face entered almost at the moment. “And pray, Mistress Mabel,” said my father, “what have you to say against my Chaplain? or why should you not be married forthwith to this chosen vessel, Jeremiah White? And Mabel, equally astonished, blushed and courtied, and courtied and blushed. Then my father, flinging off his hat and mailed gloves, ordered the Episcopalian to perform the ceremony on the instant, adding, he would take the place of father, and I that of bridesmaid. It was like a dream to us all! I never shall forget it,—and Jerry never can; it was most wonderfully comic—Only imagine it, Constance!”

Lady Frances had been so carried away by her mirthful imagining, that she had little heeded her mournful friend; nor was it till her last sentence—“Only imagine it, Constance!”—that she looked fully upon her.

“Hush!” murmured Constantia, in a hollow tone;—“hush!” she repeated.

“Merciful Heaven! what is it?” inquired Frances, terrified at her earnestness.

“Hush!” again said Constantia: adding, “Do you not hear?”

“Hear? I hear nothing but the tolling of the midnight bell—’Tis twelve o’clock.”

“It is,” said Constantia, in a voice trembling with intense suffering; it is twelve o’clock—My wedding day is indeed come!”

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